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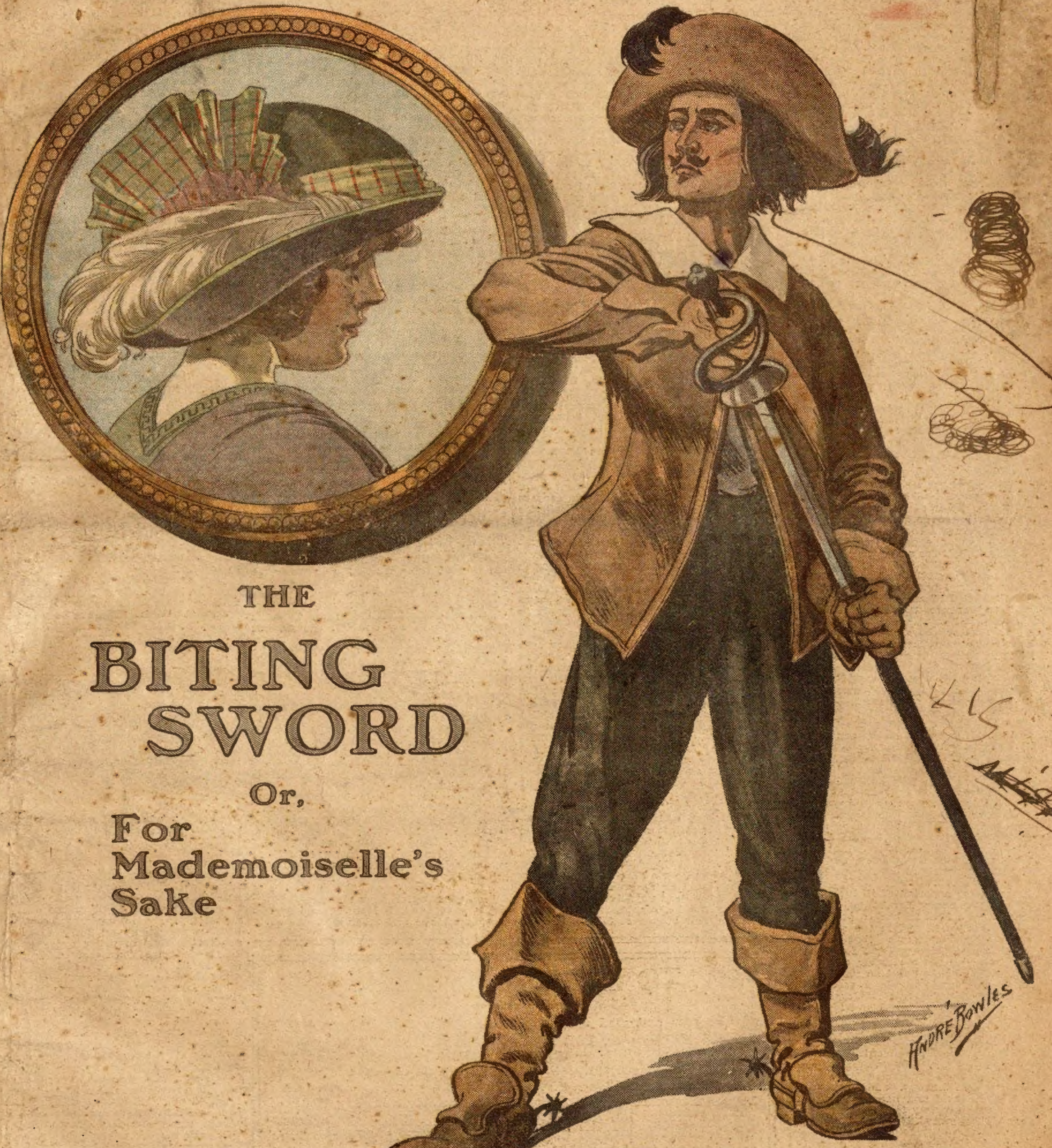

THE BITING SWORD

Or, For Mademoiselle's Sake

(See next page.)

The Biting Sword

Or, For Mademoiselle's Sake -:- By Victor Ardmore

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CHAPTER I.

I AM ATTACKED.

A PLAGUE on the carelessness of servants say I! Yet, had Mynheer Keyser's maid not swept the table bare without a thought, and had I not forgotten that she was likely to do some such mischief, the story of my life would have been very different, and perhaps far less to my liking.

The double slip brought me a fill of adventure, and it was something to my taste. Men had not nicknamed me "the Biting Sword" for nothing, for I had made a certain reputation with the steel in the past, while the new turn of events gave me a chance to fight again; ay, and to have my appetite satiated with fighting. Other things befell me, and some had the thrill so dear to warm-running blood.

The letter had been brought to my lodgings, and the servant maid had cast it upon the table, close by other papers that belonged to me. I was away, making preparation to carry out certain directions received from my patron, Monsieur Francois Rombouts, all of which bade fair to give me lively work to do in my line. If I had returned earlier and read that letter, I should have acted very differently, for this was the way the letter ran:

"Master Basil Stelland: These are to countermand all my words to you. Do not go to the house of Mynheer Winckle, do not receive orders from any man at present, and consider the enterprise upon which I have thought to employ you wholly annulled for now. I have learned that which makes my former plan hazardous to all and of great danger to you. Details I cannot give now, for I am called away to the North on urgent business and shall not finish for some days. On my return I shall esteem it a pleasure to enlist you further in my cause. Do not go to Winckle's house. You are young to die. I am, sir, your obliged friend,

"FRANCOIS ROMBOUTS."

This was the letter I ought to have received. Unluckily, when I left the house that morning, I had said to the servant maid that a litter of papers on my table should be destroyed, and after she had carelessly dropped the newly-come letter upon the rest, she came later and bore everything away for a clearance. Therein lay the mischief.

It was the year 1675, and my tenth year in New York. I had come from England with Colonel Richard Nicolls, when he sailed to capture the town from the Dutch, and all went well with me while he was master there, but not so well when he was gone. Let it be said frankly that my pocket was not heavy with money, and that I sometimes had to guess hard as to where I would find my breakfast for the coming morning. Some men called me an adventurer, and perhaps I was so in part.

How I lived during the years that followed matters not, yet let me say stoutly that I did harm to no human being maliciously. Neither does it matter that I was accused of doing harm, for my accusers were men who had suffered at my hands when they misused me or others. It was from my affrays with certain knaves of that sort that I won my nickname of the "Biting Sword," and sure it was that I could handle a blade with dexterity. I hold it true that all of my sex should be swordsmen, and what that ability sometimes did for me let the future pages tell.

It was after a period of ill luck that I first met Francois Rombouts, the city merchant who held so high a position in the business world and in the regard of our magistrates. From that time I counted myself his employe, for though he did not pay me a regular salary, he had work for me to do at frequent intervals, sending me to various places in the colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Thus I gave him irregular service and he paid me for it.

No man was more honest that he, and no service more honest, yet my enemies saw fit to term me an adventurer, a liver upon his bounty, and a quarrelsome knave, though I quarreled only when beset by real knaves, and earned my bread by faithful and hazardous efforts. And I carved my way to a degree of success with my sword.

Now, coming into the house, I wore that sword at my hip, but I drew the buckle and cast both blade and belt upon the table.

"Two hours to linger," I said aloud, "and then I'll be off to Mynheer Winckle's."

What if I had found that letter the servant had carried away as rubbish? In that case I should not have gone to Mynheer Winckle's, and should have missed much peril, and there would have been much blood left in its proper place that was now destined to be shed, and—but I shall ever be glad the letter was lost.

Sitting at the table I meditated idly as to the future. Once at Winckle's I should receive my directions, but until then I was to know nothing concerning the business in hand. It might be one of a dozen things. I did not like the idea of taking orders from a stranger, but it was the wish of Monsieur Rombouts that I should act in the case and that was sufficient for me.

I was sipping a glass of wine when a knock sounded at the door. It was with total carelessness that I spoke the word "enter," but I grew more interested when the result was seen. Two strangers appeared, and then paused and looked at me sharply. All sorts of men had passed before my eyes in the last ten years, and I had learned that plain clothes and plainer faces did not necessarily make a fool or a knave, but the impression I received of this pair was not agreeable.

It would have been more to my taste if they had turned and left me to myself, but after that brief pause and attentive survey they advanced again and bowed amicably if not becomingly.

"Master Stelland?" questioned the foremost.

"That is my name," I replied quietly.

"Known as a superior swordsman?"

"Possibly," I agreed.

"Then you are he whom we wish to deal with, and as Basil Stelland is celebrated for being a bold, reliable person, there is work we shall be glad to have you do."

They took seats, though not at my invitation. Such a rough and dubious pair were not to my fancy, and I would have seen them depart with satisfaction. As they saw fit to remain, I had to submit or deal the rebuff I thirsted to give, but deferred.

"I think," I said calmly, "that you make some mistake. I am not expecting callers, nor am I a man of business. Doubtless you have confounded me with another person."

"Nay, not so, sir," replied the spokesman. "It is well known to us that there is but one of your name, and you confess to the identity of him. You do well, for 'tis a reputation one may well esteem most highly. But a truce to what may seem idle compliments. Sir, the gentlemen I represent in my humble way have need of a bold, skillful man along with them on an expedition to the North, where trade with the Indians has grown lively. They want this trade, and go to meet divers red men, but they have rivals, and it has come to their ears that they will be harassed by lawless followers of those rivals. You, sir, may win a handsome sum by accompanying our party as a swordsman who may be needed to preserve us if we really are attacked. The pay will be good, and the service nothing unless in time of peril."

He said it with speed, as if fearful I would shut him off, and I listened attentively. While I listened I did due thinking, and my intuition was alert. I could almost have sworn that the man was lying, even as I placed him as a knave.

"Who," I quietly asked, "is your patron?"

"Sir, that shall be told to you when we start—ay, and you will know the honorable gentleman well, and esteem him. But until we do thus meet, I cry you to have patience and let me hide his name."

"And when do we start?"

"In the morning at break of day."

I shook my head negatively.

"It may not be, mynheers. The night of the morrow sees a social event here, and certain gentlemen need a bold swordsman in their train then. I can say no more, but I must needs forbear accepting your offer."

Here was fiction on my part, for I was not to be in New York at the time of the social event, but I wanted to be rid of the callers immediately but quietly, and it seemed the best method.

Both of them claimed to be gravely disappointed, and said as much rather well, adding further words that I tolerated because they were giving signs of departure. Regrets duly expressed, the leader rose and looked curiously at my sword on the table.

"And this," he said, half-questioningly, "is the blade that is so famous in this Colony."

"'Tis my sword," I returned briefly.

"There must be magic in it as well as in it's master's arm and nerves, else this young land would not ring with the reputation of it. May I be permitted to inspect it briefly?"

He started to pick sword and scabbard up, but my hand was there before him, and I drew forth the blade at one movement, though with no show of undue haste.

"I will give you the best light upon it," I added politely, holding it with advanced point, but at an angle.

"Ha!" said the spokesman, pretending to be thrilled with admiration, though I noticed a falling in his facial expression, "it glitters like a lady's jewels. A noble blade, truly! Has it unusual weight of metal?"

Again he reached out to take it, but I took not the hint. As soon would I open a blood vessel as to give my weapon over to strangers thus, and I seriously distrusted the purposes of these fellows.

"It has a weight to suit me," I answered, with outward amiability.

"Yet I fancy it will bend like a ringing bell. Pardon me!"

His fingers worked nervously as he reached farther for the steel.

"Nay!" I cried sharply. "I never give over my sword!"

There was no mistaking my meaning, and the expected came quickly. As one man both knaves drew their own blade, and they were upon me like leaping panthers, weapons bared, the true swordsman's clutch upon the hilts, the truculent faces and the gleaming eyes of those who mean serious work. The purpose was, as I had suspected, to stab me then and there.

Ah! well, it was a rather pretty engagement. They were two to one and cunning at their trade, which was that of the sword. Steel rang upon steel, and as they tried to make a runaway race of it, I had a lively minute or two. Twice their skill enabled them to prick me slightly in my doublet, though not in my skin.

Then the end came as I twisted the blade from one rascal's grasp, and then pressed the other so hotly that I first beat down his guard and then gave him a smart blow with the side of my sword that nearly paralyzed his arm for the moment.

The victory was mine, and, knowing they had come to murder me, I would soon have put them out of the reckoning had I been the mere adventurer my enemies claimed, but I liked not the useless flow of blood.

Alarm was in their hearts, all the same, and as the first snatched up his weapon they rushed headlong from the room. I sent a taunting laugh after them, and then a parting word.

"Your lives were honestly forfeit, but retain them as a gift from me. I like not things so vile."

They clattered on the stairs and directly the outer door slammed. They were gone, and I leaned on my triumphant blade and meditated.

Had the attack anything to do with my coming work?

CHAPTER II.

MY GREAT TRUST.

THE night was wearing on toward midnight when I left my lodgings and started for Mynheer Winckle's. Accustomed to wild events, I had dismissed my recent hostile visitors from mind, and my only thought was to keep my engagement and await the bidding of my patron's representative.

Fortune plays odd pranks with us. If I had seen the letter from Monsieur Rombouts countermanding his direction, I should not have gone, and my history would probably never have been put on paper. Let these pages prove whether Dame Fortune did me ill or well.

I found the streets as usual, which meant that they were no silent stretches. We of New York had not the ponderous ways of the men of Connecticut, and the darlings of fate who had been cast into the maw of this new land of America dropped little of the gay and often turbulent life they had previously led at the courts of England, France, and Holland—for we had a mixed population, and it was a day when wine was preferred to water and the sword to the pen.

Now, lively men who were sober and riotous men who were half-drunken walked up and down, but they gave me no evil word, and I ignored them. With sword at belt I walked to the dwelling of Mynheer Winckle, which was one of the northernmost in the city proper.

I was expected, and a servant met me at the gate. Five minutes later I was with the master of the home, a stout, stolid Dutchman who greeted me with kindness that, as I soon learned, was peculiar to him. Seated together he would have me drink, and as I believe strongly in temperance, I was glad it was scarcely more than a thimbleful he set before me. Then he came to business with commendable promptness.

"I suppose Monsieur Rombouts said everything to you that is necessary, and that you have come prepared for a considerable absence from this city?"

"My patron told me that, mynheer," I replied.

"Then you are fully prepared?"

"Yes."

"And likewise reconciled to a long bout with peril?"

"In my patron's service I meet what happens by the way, and think only of his orders."

"Excellent!" exclaimed the good man. Then he looked about him as if to make sure no other ears would drink in our talk, and added: "You are to go to New Haven."

"Very well," I answered quietly.

"As an escort to a party of three."

"Again it is well."

"Bide a bit, Master Stelland! If you surmise that the party will be wholly men, you err greatly. You will start four in number, yourself, a man servant, a maid servant and—most important of all, a lady who is young, intelligent, and of the best blood that flows in this Colony. New York has not her superior in social position or importance."

Mynheer Winckle had surprised me—that I will confess. Never before had I acted as escort to a lady on a journey as long as that to New Haven, and the matter had an odd element. Yet, all work that was honorable was in my line, and I betrayed little surprise as I repeated my last words.

"It is well."

"You will start within the hour, and travel all night. After that you will hide in the woods during the day, and this order is to prevail to the end. All travel is to be in darkness, and when light is over the land you will keep in strictest seclusion, using every possible device to remain unseen. This is imperative."

"It shall be so, mynheer."

"It is the order of Monsieur Rombouts. There is urgent need that the young lady be conducted to New Haven with the utmost secrecy."

"It shall be done."

"Even when you travel by night you will use all possible caution. If you see or hear other horsemen you will draw to one side, hiding in the darkest coverts and keeping total silence, and permit them to pass. Speak to no man if you can avoid it. Between here and New Haven there are few houses, but you will pass these few circuitously, to prevent wayside dwellers from seeing you."

I nodded my comprehension calmly.

"If you are fortunate the journey will be peaceful, but if you are molested or attacked—then fight to the death! Yield to no man! It will be your life or theirs, and more—you will have the life of your fair charge to protect, and it will not be worth a breath if you fail to protect it!"

TO LEDGER READERS

Be sure and read the two leading stories in this issue, "THE BITING SWORD; or, FOR MADEMOISELLE'S SAKE," and "MRS. RALEIGH'S SECRET; or, THE WORLD'S STANDARD." You will also find three short stories in this number, each of which is particularly good. Go to them, they will entertain you. In next week's Ledger there will be a lot of good things, notably a leading two part story of western life called "THE MINE MYSTERY," and a funny story entitled "DONATIONS TO THE HEATHEN." We also have ready for the press two of the strangest stories you ever read, called "THE CONQUEST OF THE SPIDERS," and "THE PRINCESS ZITHENA; or, THE CALL OF THE SOUL." Watch the Ledger; it will keep you awake. Give our boy agents "a lift" by buying the paper regularly, or send in a subscription.

My distaste for receiving orders secondhand—though from my patron's chosen friend—vanished at once. Here was a service worth accepting, and the blood leaped warmly in my veins. Danger was a tonic to me, and already I had the feel of it, the scent of it, the delight of it to act as a lure. As a race-horse thrills at the call, so I thrilled as I read beyond the explanation. Peril, cunning, warlike endeavor—good! I longed to shake the hand of Mynheer Winckle, but curbed myself and was outwardly composed.

My companion looked at my side.

"You carry a sword," he said, smiling faintly. "Report says few in this land are your equals, and none your superior. 'The Biting Sword,' men term you, and because you are so cunning, so successful, so prone to make your nickname a matter of fact. Master Stelland, you will have need for that blade if you are seen by foes on the way to New Haven."

"Very well," I commented.

"If luck is with you, or, I should say, with us all, including Monsieur Rombouts, the worst you have to dread is a prying busybody, but—mark this down!—there are enemies with purpose as strong as our own, who, if they suspected your errand, would turn Manhattan Island upside down to defeat you, seize the young lady, and kill you."

"My utmost efforts shall be used to protect the lady, mynheer."

"We know that, and trust you fully. Yet, have it always in mind that you may be pursued by the deadly foes of the lady and of our enterprise, and that they will slay you and do ill to her if they surmise what is afoot. That being ascertained by them, they will pursue, harass, and try to murder you. Plain words, these, master, but they are imperatively necessary."

"It is wise that I am so fully enlightened," I remarked.

"The lady, herself, will let you know the particular house in New Haven to which you are to conduct her. Now, that is all, unless you have questions to ask, and the start should be made at once. Four saddle-horses and a pack-horse will go with you, the latter to convey necessaries, among which is food, for you can eat at no house. There are no other valuables. The man servant is named Hugh, and the maid, Anne. The lady you can, if you desire, address as Mademoiselle."

He rose, and the interview was over. It was nothing to me that so much was kept back, for it was the way of the new country and the wild, unsettled times. More than that, it was my duty to obey as any gentleman dependent should, not to seek prematurely for answers to riddles.

Still, I was plunged in wonder. Who was the lady, and why so much secrecy? And why such extensive preparations for a short journey? I knew that, as the crow flew, it was little more than seventy miles to the Connecticut town, and though perhaps more by land, there seemed to be small occasion for a pack-horse.

These points I passed by lightly. The one dominating thing was that my patron wanted the lady conveyed to New Haven, and she was going if my sword and my wits could take her there. But I did not know of the letter the careless servant had destroyed through her stupidity.

The master of the house at once conducted me outside. Surrounded by high walls his grounds lay dark and silent, with enough of occasional trees to make view very much impeded. I could see only dark shadows where these trees cast their gloomy images in the dim starlight, but Mynheer Winckle took me two hundred yards, and the scene changed.

I saw horses and human beings, and we were quickly among them. A man raised his hat civilly, but it was at his companions I looked. My guide led me to one of the two.

"Mademoiselle," he said, in a low voice, "permit me to introduce Master Stelland."

The lady bowed as low as I could hope.

"I am pleased," she replied, "to greet one as favorably mentioned as Master Stelland."

The words were not out of the ordinary, but they gave me a curious thrill. Her manner was high-bred and her voice rang with rare music, while there was something of gracious kindness, barely tempered with the urbane reserve of the patrician class, that pleased my ear ardently. I was glad that I was to conduct her to New Haven.

Barely giving me time to reply, Winckle hastily added:

"Nothing further is necessary, and you all know your allotted duties. Mademoiselle, Providence speed you and keep you! Master Stelland, the rest is with you and Heaven, but know that you carry rich treasure in human life. Pray mount, all!"

It was my pleasure to assist Mademoiselle to her saddle, and in a few seconds more we were in motion. When we passed the upper gate, Winckle closed and barred it after us, and we were fairly off on our journey. A few houses remained that we were to pass by detour, and after that something like unbroken solitude lay between us and our destination—if we could avoid other persons.

"I will endeavor, Mademoiselle," I said, "to make your journey as free from weariness as possible."

"What, sir, about danger?" she asked, with the lightest of laughs.

"That, I trust, will never trouble us."

I said it well, for, though aware that the foresight of men is as nothing, I did not dream what waited along our road.

CHAPTER III.

BESET BY FOES.

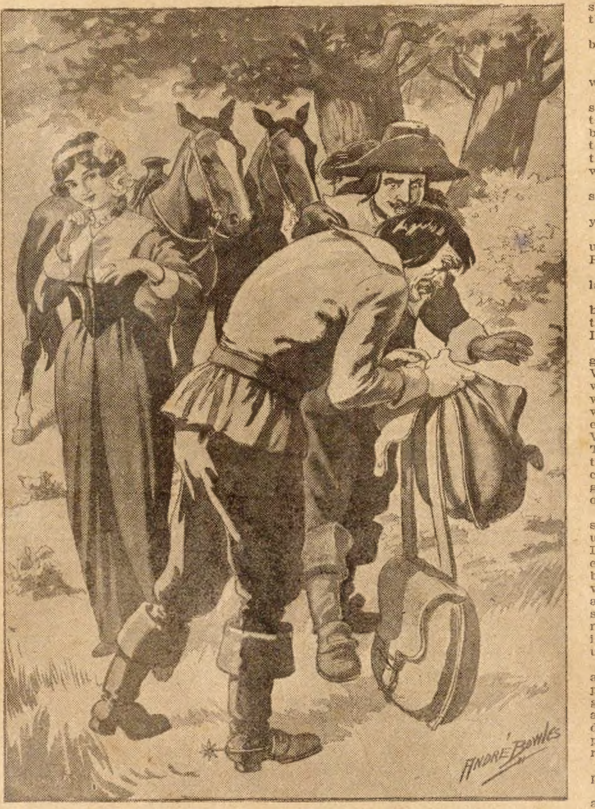
WE WERE a trifle slow in assuming definite order, and as I saw the man servant looking at me in a way I set down as wishful, I bethought myself to learn the mettle that was in him.

"Hugh," I said, "what weapons have you?"

"A pistol, master, and this short sword. The first I use but ill, but they compliment me by saying that I can use a blade with some dexterity. I have been a soldier, master."

"Excellent!" I declared. "Now I can guess what your courage is."

"As to that, I was never an impressed man. I enlisted because the odor of battle is a joy in my nostrils, and the clash of steel fairer music than I ever heard in a burgher's house. Despite this, my courage gets no word of praise from my own lips."



What I saw dumfounded me.

"Yet, they selected you for this service."

"Ay, master."

"Did they say there might be danger?"

"Oceans of it, sir."

"Still, you are ready to go?"

"I go where Mynheer Winckle bids me, and if there should be fighting, why I'll see it to the end, or die trying."

Now, I am quick to know when I hear the words of a truly brave man, and as this servitor spoke frankly, though without boasting, I had the trip and savor of good material in his speech. I was so much pleased that I reached out from my horse's back and shook his hand. After that we said little for some time, for this had been one of the things impressed upon us by the sagacious Winckle. Late wanderers were likely to be about until after we passed the Harlem River, and we were cautioned to bear before being heard, and to take every precaution.

When we did pass the river I rode to Mademoiselle's side.

"We have at last left New York behind," I said.

"I am not sorry," she replied, sighing lightly. "Perhaps I will tell you why. I think you are English, Master Stelland?"

"All English, Mademoiselle," I returned.

"And so am I. It may be heresy, yet I feel more at ease in New Haven than in New York. I grant that the Dutch are excellent persons, most of them, but I prefer the sound of my native tongue and the way of my people. Do not think that I forget kind friends who are Dutch. Now, Monsieur Francois Rombouts is part Dutch and part French, and nobody is nobler than he, but—oh! bless me, I am so provincial that I love my own race best."

"'Tis the way of many."

"That is why I do not regret this going to Connecticut. That reminds me, do you really expect trouble on the road?"

"All things are possible in this, the year 1675, but it is the probable we will [illegible] our expectations upon. I expect no difficulty."

"Mynheer Winckle really worried me a bit with his cautions, but I know his goodness of heart. Frankly, I like not this traveling by night. It is a new way for me."

"I fancy you will prove equal to it, though."

"I will not so far be false to my blood inheritance as to quake because the sun has taken another course. I think I am no coward."

"Mademoiselle, I dare be sworn to the truth of that!" I exclaimed.

We were interrupted as Hugh pressed forward to my side.

"The sound of horses' feet is behind us, sir," he announced.

We fell silent and I listened keenly. The regular beat of feet was clear, and they were coming at a hard pace. This was the first illustration of my duty, as explained by Mynheer Winckle, and I did not need more time to determine on our course. Trees were by the wayside, heavy-trunked and thick enough for all purposes, and the ground was free from bushes. We turned from our course and drew rein a few yards beyond, prepared to wait.

The thud of feet became heavier, and presently we could hear the rattle almost where we had left the faint road. Voices, too, floated our way.

"They can't be much farther along."

"Unless that knave of a Stelland was sharp enough to fall into a gallop at once."

"It would not be sharpness. He is too shrewd to take the breath from his horses at the start. He will go slow, and we are sure to come up with them soon——"

I heard no more, and they rattled away from our hiding-place with their steeds flinging the earth freely as they pounded with their feet in the run.

"Pursued, so soon!" murmured Mademoiselle, softly.

"We were ordered not to go back, whatever happened," reminded the maid, stoutly.

"Go back?" cried her mistress. "Not we! Our path is forward."

I was slow in coming into this talk, for I was in the grasp of a new discovery. Of the two hostile voices one had been familiar to me, for I had heard it only a few hours back. It was that of the fellow who acted as spokesman when my visitors tried to possess themselves of my sword.

Here was proof at the very beginning of our journey that a clear, determined plot was opposed to us, and I knew that the road to New Haven was not to be one rose-strewn. And I wondered whether I would then be lifeless or only a fraction cut to pieces if I had been stupid enough to yield up my weapon to a stranger. With such a precious charge as Mademoiselle this discovery gave me a brief chill, but I rallied and acted my part.

"You say right, Mademoiselle, and we will heed the call of wisdom. Yes, our path is forward, and it leads to New Haven. If there is trouble by the way, so much the worse for them who make the trouble."

"Your name was mentioned just now by them, sir."

"I noticed that."

"Then they must have some clew to what we intend."

"Say, rather, that we may have been seen as we passed the Harlem. It matters little which it is, for we have no business with the rascals. If they seek to do business, 'tis in my heart to pity them. Be at peace, Mademoiselle, for we are going to Connecticut."

There was no boast in my manner, and she understood.

"You hearten me, sir, yes, greatly. And your plan?"

"While they think they are following us, we will follow them. Are we ready? Proceed!"

"It has merely been a wayside rest," laughed the lady.

"Ay, to give our horses a chance for breath. Pardon, Mademoiselle, but I trust you will find it as amusing as I do."

We returned to the road. Now, in good truth, I was not in the least amused. We were a cumbersome party with two women along, and light-riding men would have all the advantage of us, yet we must for a time track after our enemies, and until the road to Mynheer Vanderwinder's apple farm was reached. There we could branch to the left, and though we would lose time by the change, it might delay us less than to give ten minutes or more to whipping our foes.

At that moment I was glad Mademoiselle was along, for it would be a pleasure to fight for her, but, had I been alone, I would have had another delight. It ever went wrong with me to be dogged by designing men, and as these fellows were so plainly to be placed, I was athirst to have a try at them with my sword. Truly, there is a keen enjoyment in soundly punishing those who ignore law and decency and try to harass us.

We were in a crisis of our affairs, and I called for caution. There was no proof that our foes had kept on at their gallop, and danger that they might halt and waylay us if we lost a point in our defense. All speech was reduced to low pitch, and we longed for Vanderwinder's road.

"We are nearly there," said Hugh, pressing forward to my side.

"I am wondering," I replied. "If they are shrewd they may have a party of their knaves, or, at least, a single watcher to have eye to the forks. We will not go there."

"No?" whispered Mademoiselle, surprised.

"No. The woods are wide and the going decent. We will avoid the forks, but strike Vanderwinder's road farther on. No place can be better for our detour than this. Enter, friends!"

The readiness with which I was obeyed pleased me greatly, for the situation was one where objection would almost have been pardonable, since it was the wish of my charges to get to New Haven with the utmost dispatch. I could not forbear expressing my gratitude.

"Oh! sir," Mademoiselle returned quickly, "your will is law here. Mynheer Winckle said to us that all plans were to originate with you, and that, for our lives' sake, we were to comply without demur. Ay, Master Stelland, and he paid tribute to your judgment, affirming that if any man could find a safe road to Connecticut it was you."

"And," put in Anne, "he said in my hearing that you were free to choose what roads seemed meet, though they took us to Yonkers or Albany."

"In this you speak with truth, Anne," added the mistress. "It is for you to select the way, master."

Winckle had said as much to me, but it was much to my liking that the others understood and were content. Matters being at this pitch I had but to use my best skill, and I promise you I was keyed up to the cast of the die. Yes, and I hoped earnestly that the cube fell well whenever I cast it on the board.

(Continued on page twenty nine.)

BLACKFACE, THE TERRIBLE

By Arthur Wallace Peach

"SO SIDON plugged you in the hoof, did he?" McPherson asked, glancing across at the younger ranger whose bandaged ankle was stretched out on a rough, homemade chair.

"He got me all right, Mac, but the foot is coming along in good shape," Hurley answered, smiling at the grizzled woodsman, and taking up the pipe he had put down while he read his mail. "Now, let's have the news from the valley?"

To McPherson the men in the employ of Uncle Sam's forestry division looked for about all the information that came from the outer world; he brought with him from the valley, mail, papers, and gossip, to the rangers scattered along the hills of the Teckla range. Many a rough shack on the hillsides he brightened with his gruff humor and cheery face.

"News, lads, news—that's what I hear all the time when I hit you fellers. But I've got a bit for you: Sidon's jumped the claim."

"Jumped the claim!" Hurley said quickly.

"Yup, jest as they was haulin' him up 'fore the 'Commish, he took two jumps and went clean out the winder, and by the time the bunch got out, he'd nabbed the marshal's hoss, and—so long!"

"Must have surprised them some," commented Hurley.

"Yup, but the surprisin' ain't over yet. That squealer, Veeder, who testified ag'inst him, and was the cause of his being held, when he heard that Sidon was out, he came and 'fessed up that he'd lied."

Hurley started. "Is that right? I'm glad of it; I believed half the time that Sidon was innocent."

"Sidon don't know yet, and they say he's gunnin' round to get a potshot at Veeder; an' if he does, there's goin' to be another striker down where the coal business is boomin'. So much for Sidon. I've got somethin' that will interest you more."

McPherson doubled up a big, hairy fist and held it out a little expanded. Hurley watched him curiously.

"Down by the Little Pool I saw somethin' in the muck, and it must hev had a hoof as big as that." He nodded at his great fist.

Hurley removed his pipe and stared at the powerful hand.

"Blackface, eh?" he asked.

"Yup—Blackface. I wouldn't go out much nights, son," the old man went on. "Anyway, I wouldn't go out where something could drop on me."

"Mac," was solemn in manner, and Hurley knew it was not put on. "Let's hear about this Blackface—I've heard only rumors," he said.

The grizzled woodsman smoked his black "stub" a little while in silence.

"I ain't a-sayin' jest what I think, you understand? There's some down in the valley who says it's got a devil in it. But here's how it was.

"Johnny Kilvert went out along the Blue Top Ridge huntin'. Mighty rough country there. He didn't come back, an' a bunch went after him. They found him. He'd shot himself, some way or tuther, but that wa'n't what fazed the bunch. He'd had his throat ripped open, and he was pretty well chawed up; an' they found around him tracks—big's my fist."

He spread out the brown, hairy hand and knotted the fingers.

"You see, Johnny hurt himself some way, an' It got him bad; but Johnny put up a wallopin' fight, I guess. It looked it around. But It got him. Say, it must ha' been hard. You see, he made a little campfire under the big pines, and It dropped down on him. He couldn't put up much of a scrap, being hurt, an' so It ripped—" He motioned to his throat.

"Why," Hurley said, smiling, "it was nothing but a big cat—a panther."

"Probably," the veteran said, "I ain't a-sayin', an' you ain't heard the rest.

"They tried to run It down, but it wa'n't no use. Some of the men thought they saw It sneakin' around, but they wa'n't sure. Anyway, Dan Shafer stumbled down near that slip—you know—there at Martin's Gully, and he broke his leg. They got him back, all right; but a few of the men say, not more'n a second after Dan fell among them rocks, they heard a whimperin' up on the hills."

"Just plain happenstance, Mac; you can't make anything spooky out of it. They ought to have kept on. Why, you're superstitious as a 'breed!" jollied Hurley.

"I ain't a-sayin'," was the answer. "I'm tellin' you. An' there's a small bit more.

"Kilvert's dad put up a hundred for the hide, and Ducayet, the half-breed, from North River come over to land that hundred. He's one o' the best with a gun, and he's game, dead game. He picked up the trail, and followed it till dusk. It took him into the big pines along Hogback, and he saw It. He went to shoot, and he found he'd jammed his breech, so's it wouldn't work; and the Thing laughed at him—so Ducayet says; I'm not sayin'. He didn't dare to go back; he built a big fire and watched all the night. He see the big eyes in the pines, and the Thing laughed at him a little. It had gone with the morning. I was in the store when Ducayet came in; I saw the broken gun; I saw Ducket shake his head when they asked him if he was going back after It. He went home. Do you think a 'breed would give up a hundred dollars thus easily?"

Hurley shook his head.

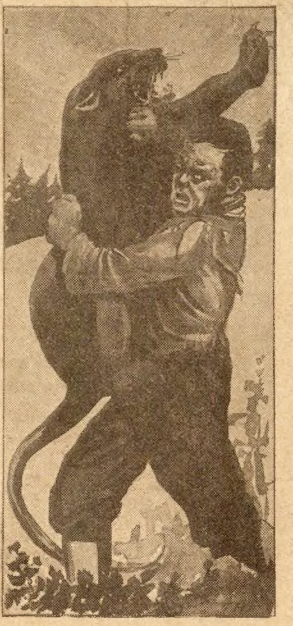
"No, not quite. There is more. Two of the officers from the Post came up, and they laughed when they started out. They rode to Hogback, left their horses with a man, and started out. They struck nothing, and began to think it was all a joke, and turned back. They found on their own tracks the prints that proved It had been trailing them. Just then they heard their horses scream. Ever hear a horse scream? No? If you do, it will be the last sound in your ears when you die.

"They rushed down the mountain. They found their horses, but they walked back to the settlement, and they carried between them a thing that was man barely living. I ain't a-sayin', but the man said, so I've heard, that the horses acted funny, and then something with a black, flat face, somethin' like a bulldog's jumped on the horse near him, broke its neck as if it was a splinter, and turned. He shot at It, but nothing happened to It; the bullets went through It like It was air——"

"Oh, pshaw!" Hurley exclaimed.

McPherson's faded eyes grew a little hard. "I'm tellin' you what I heard! But there's more.

"It knocked him down; then It disappeared, just as if It had gone into air. Then the officers came. Now that man, looked It right in the face, an' he says It wa'n't a cat. I ain't a-sayin' what It was. But men as looked It in the face say It's got a face like nothin' that ever lived afore, and they ain't all liars."



"He put up a wallopin' fight."

"Oh, there's something in it all right!" Hurley agreed thoughtfully.

"There is," assented McPherson, as he rose and began to strap his jack on his shoulders. "I tell you, Johnny Kilvert must have been in hell for a while when that Thing was killin' him. He put up a grand, good fight, did Johnny. When they found him, he had a dead bark-roll in his hand that he must have been everlastingly jabbin' into the crittur's face. He stuck the red fire to the Thing all right."

"And you saw tracks down at the pool?"

"Sure thing," McPherson answered quietly. "I knew 'em by the twisted right paw. The Thing's workin' north; an' it's my advice to you to stay tight after dark, and don't get under the big limbs. If you do, you won't want any more letters from that little gal——"

"Cover it, Mac, cover it!" Hurley returned in answer to the other's "dig." "There's no danger. I suppose you'll make Shattuck's by night."

"Yup, I'll make It. So long!"

Hurley watched the powerful figure swing down the hillside, enter the heavy timber, and disappear. Turning back into his shack, he put away his mail, and arranged the magazines and letters for reading. Meanwhile, he was thinking over the tale that the veteran had told. He, himself, attached very little significance to it. An overgrown mountain lion, for some reason, perhaps because of an injury that precluded it from pursuing and capturing agile game, might, under stress of hunger, turn to man as a good substitute for wild meat. The description of the "Thing," giving It a bulldog's face, he attributed to excitement; and as to the injuries that invariably came or injuries that resulted when It was hunted—these he thought mere chance. Half-breeds might believe that It knew when a man was crippled, but that was the half-breed's privilege. Nevertheless, he decided that he would be cautious about any night work, and planned, when he was around again, to do a little hunting on his own hook.

The sun was warm and the air inviting, and he went out in front of the shack for a little sunning. As he stepped out he discovered a small bundle of letters, that had evidently slipped out of McPherson's pack, when he twisted it higher on his shoulders before going down the steep declivity in front of the shack.

"That means a hike back for Mac when he discovers he's dropped this. Too bad I'm not in shape to chase after him," Hurley commented to himself.

He seated himself and began to read. The air was full of the sweetness of the woodland scents, and the warmth of the sun hung comfortably about the front of the shack. The mountains that stretched in a grand sweep below him clear down to the bowed curve of old Hogback were blue with a blueness that made them look like a gigantic blueprint by a Master Photographer. Hurley dropped his magazine, and watched the scene drowsily. The sound of the wind through the woods lulled him; the sun's genial warmth soothed him; a slow, delicious feeling came over him.

He woke sharply, for a moment blind, but with a terrible feeling of danger; it seemed as if inside he was a tangle of tense things that choked him and drew his breath, crowding it into him until he could not breathe.

Everything was clear in front of him the next moment; he saw it was still light, but dusk was not far off. He turned ever so slightly. He became rigid as a marble statue. He sank his teeth into his lips to still the cry, but inward, with all the frenzy with which men call upon their God in moments of the utmost anguish, he cried, "My God!"

Helpless, with wounded foot outstretched before him; without weapon for defense, with back to the shack wall, his head slightly turned, he was looking into the face of a monster—a black, twisted, scarred, hideous face, split by frothy lips that bared white, long tusks; through what might have been a nose, there was a soft sucking sound as It breathed. It was like nothing he had ever seen. Crouched beyond him, It waited.

As he fought the wild desire to rise, to scream, to shout, to wake up, and find it all a hideous nightmare; as he fought to stay the gagging in his throat, It crept nearer, until from the jumbled, twisted mass of flesh and hair, he saw the deep-set, yellow eyes, and heard the rough sucking of the breath.

Hurley's body went wet with sweat, and as suddenly, dry. Something deep within him, some strange power, held him still. Some instinct of the woods and wilds made him keep his eyes steady on the yellow slits; and slowly his whirling brain steadied. The Thing was waiting for him to move. He determined not to move. A long, tawny tail flashed and curled back of the beast.

Hurley was beginning to weaken under the strain, the terrific concentration that he was forced to use to hold himself rigid. At his first movement, It would jump, crushing him, ripping.

He thought of Kilvert, of that night fight, of Its coming when a man was hurt or in difficulty; he thought of the famous 'breed hunter, he thought—of Mac! If he would only come back in his hunt for the lost bundle!

Hurley caught himself again on the verge of motion. With all the zeal of his heart he prayed silently. But the silence of the still woods gave forth no sound of footsteps, no hint of the old woodsman who would have rushed to battle, even if armed only with a knife.

Under the agony of his position that twisted his injured ankle cruelly, Hurley felt that he must—simply must move. He was going to move, but he caught himself in time. Thus his will battled to master his body. He knew that his very muteness and inertness was baffling the Thing; but it could not go on forever.

The loathsome creature waited just in front of the door of the shack—waited for the motion that would prove the strange, quiet, man-smelling thing in front of It was living.

Suddenly, in his injured foot a slow pain started that heralded a cramp. Dizzy with the agony and realization of what the pain meant, he tried to check the movement, but the muscles would not obey his will; slowly the foot moved.

Through a mistlike haze, yet with clearness, he saw the great tawny, black-faced Thing, settle itself ready for the death spring. With a strangling cry, Hurley started up—to be crashed down into unconsciousness.

He knew he was moaning when he woke. Before the nightmare of remembrance could flash upon him, he saw a grim, lean face above his—a human face, and something was pressed to his lips. He drank the cheap trading-post whisky, and the fire of it swept through him, clearing his brain.

He sat up. Beyond he saw, and shuddered as he recalled what it signified, a tawny body with all the appearance of a mountain lion, quivering in the last throes of death.

His mind clearing still more after the strain, he looked up, and gasped, "You—Sidon!"

"It's me, boy; the chap you helped chuck in jail," the quick voice went on bitterly. "I come up here to shoot ye, an' landed jest in time to see that hell of a cat ready to go for ye. Ye showed nerve, boy, in doin' the stunt ye must hev done; but I'm kinda sorry I didn't——"

"Let the cat finish me, eh?" Hurley broke in, drawing himself to his feet. "Sid, I don't blame you, but you'll be glad you didn't! I've got good news for you; I'll tell you later. I want to see what this thing is."

Sidon hesitated, then joined Hurley as he bent over the body of the animal that had rolled down the slope a little.

The woodsman grunted as he looked. "It's Blackface, an' thar's a hundred on her. I didn't git time to see much, comin' up behind."

"It's Blackface, all right," Hurley agreed; "but what a looking beast! Johnny Kilvert sure put up a great fight with his knife and red-hot sticks from his fire to batter a face out of shape this way. Why, the nose"—Hurley bent closer—"is half slashed off!"

The nose, chops, and skin formed a jumbled, black mass of burn and knife scars, and the effect was hideous and startling.

Hurley drew back. "Bill, you did a good job——"

Clear and high, a voice reached them—McPherson's voice from the lower trail, asking if Hurley had found a bunch of letters.

Hurley cupped his hands, and in the same high, far-carrying voice answered: "Yes—and— we've— got— Blackface— too!"

To Sidon he said: "Mac will forget he's old on the way up."

* * *

His Specialty.

Two friends started out in life, each of them resolving to pursue his own ideal.

And one of them went out to see the world and the other became a hermit.

After many years they met again.

And the hermit said: "There is only one thing that I am curious about—women. Have you met any?"

"Have I met any!" exclaimed the other, smiling. "Why, women have been my specialty."

"Are they vain?"

"Very."

"Are they inquisitive?"

"Dear me, yes!"

"Is it true they talk continually?"

"Oh, yes."

"Are they extravagant?"

"Yes, enough to suit any taste."

"Have they any good points?"

"Well, I should say they have."

"What are they?"

"Well, they can be unselfish."

"Indeed!"

"And they can save, if they love enough."

"How interesting."

"And they are good nurses. In fact, they differ widely in their capabilities. They are constant and inconstant, fickle and true, small and large, charitable and uncharitable, good, bad and indifferent."

The hermit grasped his companion's hand eagerly.

"My friend," he said, "this is all very wonderful to me—your knowledge of women is evidently extensive. And now tell me how many of them have you really know?"

And the friend replied:

"One."

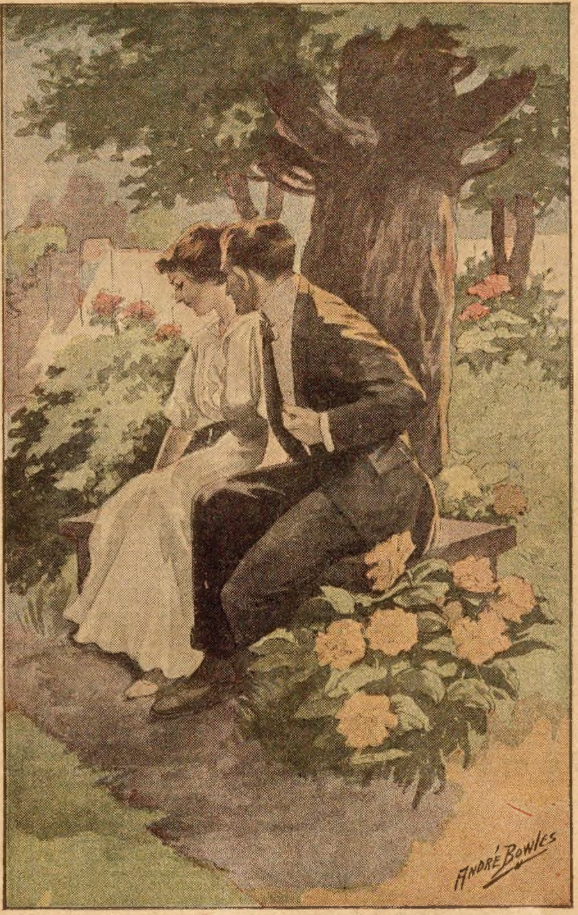
* * *

Satan will supply free shoes, but those who wear them can only travel down hill.

MRS. RALEIGH'S SECRET

Or, The World's Standard

By Emma Howard Wight



"Don't make it hard for me."

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CHAPTER I.

IN THE morning of a beautiful day in June, Martha Briggs, a quaint, kindly looking woman about fifty-two years of age, neatly dressed, sat upon the porch steps shelling peas. Flowers were blooming riotously in the yard of the old gray farmhouse. A rippling stream ran between the yard fence and the road, a footbridge spanning the stream. There were green meadows, wooded hills, and a background of blue mountains.

A man, fifty-five years of age, wearing overalls, a blue cotton shirt, and a wide straw hat, crossed the footbridge and came up to the porch.

"Why, Hiram, be that you?" exclaimed Martha. "I didn't know it war so nigh to dinner-time. And these heah peas not even on," and she started to shelling the peas industriously.

Hiram Briggs seated himself on the porch steps, removed his hat, and wiped the perspiration from his brow with a big bandanna handkerchief.

"Plenty of time fo' them peas, Marthy," he reassured her. "It wants mo'n an hour to dinner-time. I got done plowin' the co'n in the ten-acre field, and quit till arter dinner." He paused a moment, and then added, "Whar be Anna?"

"In the settin'room sewin'," replied Martha. "She's makin' herself a dress to wear to the Sunday school festival tomorrow night."

"I reckon as John Raleigh'll be takin' Anna to the festival?" and Hiram glanced questioningly at his wife.

Martha nodded. "I reckon he will."

"Pears to me like John Raleigh war kinder shinin' up to Anna?"

"He sholy be," declared Martha. "I seen some time ago that he war took with Anna," she continued complacently. "And other folks sees it, too."

Hiram sat thoughtfully for a moment. "And what about Anna?"

"Anna ain't said nothin' to me, Hiram, but atween you and me, I reckon she sets a lot of sto' by John Raleigh."

"John Raleigh's a fine young fellow," declared Hiram. "He'll make his mark, I am a-thinkin'. That thar railroad business he come about be settled. He'll be goin' back to the city befo' long now."

"I reckon he will."

Hiram was silent for a moment. "I wonder if he's ever said anything in particklar to Anna?" he murmured.

"I don't reckon he has yet," replied Martha. "But he'll be askin' her to marry him befo' he leaves. You kin take my word fo' that, Hiram," she added confidently.

"Does he know that Anna ain't our own daughter, Marthy?" queried Hiram.

"I don't reckon he do, Hiram. I don't see as it would make no difference if he did. He'd want to marry Anna jest the same."

"I reckon you're right 'bout that, Marthy." He paused, hesitatingly, then added, in a lower tone. "But it might make a difference if he knowed Anna's secret."

"Her secret?" Martha looked at him shrinkingly.

"Yes, that she'd given birth to a child."

"Oh, Hiram!" Martha looked at her husband, greatly troubled. "Do you reckon as John Raleigh'd hold that ag'in Anna?"

"He might, Marthy," Hiram admitted reluctantly.

"But Anna war took advantage of by that bad man, Hiram," declared Martha, piteously. "She war young and inexperienced."

"That's so, Marthy! that's so!"

"It do seem 'most like an act of Providence, Hiram, that the child war bo'n dead," continued Martha. "It can't never be throwed up to Anna. Nobody knows she gave birth to a child 'ceptin' you and me."

"It do seem like the Lord, in His mercy, did help us hide that po' girl's shame from the world," said Hiram. "The world, Marthy, am mighty hard on a woman. If she makes a slip and falls by the wayside, the world won't let her git up ag'in. She's allers pushed back in the dust."

"I am mighty glad nobody knows 'bout Anna," declared Martha. "Hiram it's been jest three years ago today since Anna come to us."

"Why, so it be, ma! so it be!"

Martha's face grew very sad. "We done buried our own girl the day befo'."

Hiram laid his hand with tender sympathy on his wife's knee. "'Twar a sad time, ma!"

"We war settin' on the porch, Hiram, you and me, feelin' mighty sad and sorful," continued Martha, reminiscently. "The moon war shinin' bright as day. I looked up and seen Anna comin' across the footbridge. I set up and stared at her all a-tremble. She war tall like our Mary, and her hair war 'bout the same color. It 'peared to me like it war Mary comin' across the footbridge as I'd seen her come so often."

"Anna do favor Mary mightily," observed Hiram.

"Anna come straight on to the po'ch," continued Martha. "Then she stopped and looked at us pitiful-like. She war weary and spent, and her face was 'most as pale as Mary's war when she lay in her coffin. 'May I rest here?' said Anna. 'I am so tired.' 'Come in and welcome,' I said. She started to come up the steps to the porch, and down she fell in a faint. You carried her in, Hiram, and laid her on the bed in the spar'room." She paused and then continued in a half-whisper, "Befor' mo'nin' she'd done give birth to a child."

Hiram shook his head, murmurin, "Po' girl! po' girl!"

"During all them hours that Anna lay sufferin', with nobody to do for her but me, she jest crept right into my lonely, sorrowful heart. It seemed like the good Lord had sent her to take the place of the dear one what war gone. I've growed to love her the same as though she war my own child."

"Bein' you're so fond of Anna, ma, I reckon you ain't hankerin' fo' her to git marr'ed and go 'way and leave you?" Hiram avoided looking at her as he spoke.

"I want her to be happy," replied Martha, simply. "If she's set her heart on that thar young man, John Raleigh, I want her to have him."

"I'd ruther you didn't feel that way 'bout it, ma," said Hiram, regretfully.

Martha gave him a quick, inquiring glance.

"What makes you wish that, Hiram?"

"I am afeard, Martha, it may not tu'n out jest as you want it," explained Hiram, reluctantly.

"What do you mean, Hiram?"

"That is wouldn't be fair to let John Raleigh marry Anna without he knowed 'bout—the child."

"He couldn't find no better girl for a wife," declared Martha, bridling. "Anna's sweet and true and good."

"She be that—God bless her!" Hiram arose. "Now, don't you be worryin' of yo' self, ma!"

"I can't help worryin', Hiram," declared Martha, plaintively. "I don't want Anna to have no mo' sorrow. She's had her share, po' girl!"

"Women folks has mo'n their share of trouble in this heah world," said Hiram, as he passed into the house.

Martha shook her head as she gave her attention again to shelling the peas.

"It do 'pear like women folks have mo' sorrow than men folks," she murmured.

A pretty young girl, gentle and pensive-looking, came out of the house with a dainty summer gown over her arm. Martha looked up at her tenderly.

"My dress is finished, mother," the girl said, going to Martha and holding the dress for her inspection.

"Its mighty pretty, dearie," declared Martha, "You're goin' to look mighty sweet in it." She looked smilingly at Anna. "I reckon you'll be goin' to the festival with John Raleigh?"

Anna turned away to lay the dress over the back of a chair.

"He has asked me to go with him, mother," she replied.

"Of co'se you'll accept his invite, dearie?"

"I think—so." Anna came and sat down on the step at Martha's feet.

"Why, you talk like you hadn't made up yo' mind!" exclaimed Martha. "You wouldn't be disappointin' him now?"

"I will go with him," Anna replied, but she sighed as she spoke.

"John Raleigh's a fine young man," declared Martha. "Hiram 'lows as he's bound to rise in the world. I reckon all the girls be jealous 'cause he ain't got eyes fo' nobody but you." She smiled at Anna, but the girl did not return the smile. Her sweet face was very sad. "But as I told Hiram, thar ain't nothin' s'prisin' in that. Thar ain't a girl 'round here as can come up to our girl."

Anna shook her head with a faint smile. "You think that, mother, because you love me," she said.

"I reckon I ain't the onliest one as thinks it," declared Martha, with an insinuating smile.

"No one will ever love me as you do," said Anna, quietly. "My own mother could not have done more for me than you have done. Why, you——" she paused with a flush that changed to pallor—"oh, you know all that I owe to you!" She hid her face against Martha's knee.

"God sent you to Hiram and me, dearie, to take the place of our dead child," said Martha, smoothing caressingly the girl's fair hair. "We love you same as though you war our own flesh and blood."

"I wish I were more worthy of your love," said the girl, sadly. "I wish," her head drooping, "that I were as pure and stainless as your Mary was."

"Thar, dearie! Don't think about what's past," comforted Martha. "Forget about it!"

"Oh, if I only could forget!" cried Anna, passionately.

"Dearie, Hiram and me wants you to be happy."

"I am happy, mother," declared Anna, smiling. "How can I help being happy in this dear place with you and father? I love you both so dearly. At times I am sad. I cannot help it. But I would be indeed ungrateful if I did not find comfort, content, happiness in your love, in your constant thought for me. I would be an outcast, my shame known to the world if you had not taken me in. You have stood between me and the scorn and cruelty of the world. I dare not think of what my life would be if I had not found—you." She took Martha's hand and kissed it. "I can never be sufficiently grateful. I can never repay you."

"You've been repayin' us right along, dearie. Hiram and me war mighty sad and lonely when God sent you to us." She arose, preparing to enter the house. "Of co'se," smilingly, "we don't reckon on keepin' you with us always. You'll be gittin' married one of these fine days." She gave a smiling glance back at Anna as she passed into the house.

"Poor mother!" murmured Anna, very sadly. "She believes in her simplicity, that there are men in the world capable of loving me as she loves. I wonder if there is a man in the world whose love will stand the test of a woman's shame? There was a Man who once lifted a fallen woman from the dust, but He was not Human, He was divine." She arose, and going to the chair on which she had placed the dress, stood looking down upon it sadly. "Why should I try to make myself fair in his eyes? I shall never be anything to him. I shall never know the happiness of being wife to the man I love, the tender joy of motherhood. I am outside the pale of a man's honest love." She sighed, lifted the dress, and passed into the house.

A good-looking young man came briskly across the footbridge. He advanced quickly, with an alert look about him, in which there was a touch of expectancy. At that moment Anna came out of the house and half stopped at the sight of John Raleigh. He went eagerly toward her. She descended from the porch and went rather slowly to meet him. He lifted his hat.

"Good morning!"

"Good morning, Mr. Raleigh!" Anna responded, a little constrainedly. "Come in," and she made a movement to enter the house.

"I prefer remaining here. I love this dear old garden." He glanced about him lingeringly, then looked at Anna. "Come, sit down." He led the way to a rustic seat under a fine shade tree. When Anna was seated, he stood beside her, looking down upon her. "Do you know what I was wishing on my way here?"

She shook her head. She did not look at him, but sat with downcast eyes, her hands clasped upon her lap.

"I was wishing that you would appear glad to see me," he continued.

He paused. She did not speak.

"But you are not so glad as I would have you be." He sat down beside her.

"I am pleased to see you, Mr. Raleigh," said Anna.

He smiled whimsically.

"I did not say pleased, I said glad." She glanced at him questioningly. "There is a great difference in the two words, as I interpret them. A woman is pleased to see a friend—any one whom she likes. It is gladness that thrills her heart at the coming of the man she—loves." He leaned toward her. "Can't you guess why I want you to appear glad, Anna? I love you! I want you to love me!"

"God give me the strength to do what is right!" was Anna's thought.

"I want to see the gladness of love shining in your eyes, Anna," he continued. "I want to hear its thrill in your voice." He took her hand. She did not withdraw it, but she kept her face averted. He looked at her with a little puzzled frown. "Anna, you baffle me! There are times when I fancy you care for me. Then, again, I fear you do not. I must know! Tell me, do you love me, Anna?"

She turned slowly and looked at him. "Yes, I do love you," she said.

His face lighted. "My darling, you have made me very happy," he exclaimed.

He drew her toward him, she yielding, forgetful of everything save that she loved him. He kissed her upon the lips. "You will be my wife, Anna?"

She started, drawing away from him. "No, oh, no!" she replied.

John Raleigh was very much taken aback.

"You mean that you will not marry me?"

"Yes."

"Why not?"

"Please do not ask me," she entreated.

"I do ask you." He spoke with firmness. "I have a right to know why you refuse."

"I have a reason, a good reason."

"What is it?" persisted John Raleigh, doggedly.

"I cannot tell you what it is, only that it is all sufficient."

"Let me be the judge of that. Tell me the reason."

Anna shuddered: "No! Oh, no!" she cried.

She started to her feet and moved away from him. He arose and followed her.

"Anna, listen to me! You are not acting fairly! I love you! You are the only woman I have ever loved and wanted for my wife. You admit that you love me, but in the same breath you refuse to marry me. You claim that you have a reason. I must know what this reason is. I cannot give you up without a protest. I can imagine no reason for your refusing to marry me unless"—he looked at her questioningly—"there is some one who has a claim upon you." He paused a moment. "Is that the reason?"

She shook her head. "No, there is no one who has a claim upon me," she replied.

He drew a breath of relief. "I am glad it isn't that," he declared. "Come, dearest, tell me." And he tried to draw her in his arms.

She evaded him. "Don't make it so hard for me, John," she implored. "I can't be strong with your arms about me. I would weaken. I would be tempted to let everything go and cling to you. The temptation might prove too strong. I must be strong and brave. It cannot be!"

"Anna, you will drive me mad!" exclaimed John Raleigh.

"John, won't you take what I say and spare me an explanation?" asked the girl. "I know I am asking a great deal of you. But will you not do it?"

He turned away from her abruptly, walked away, struggling with himself. She watched him wistfully. At length he returned, and the look on his face told her decision even before he spoke.

"I cannot do it, Anna. You are asking too much of me." She sighed, looking at him with a touch of plaintive reproach. "If you had not admitted that you loved me it might be different. I would not press you in this way. But I cannot go away like this knowing that you love me."

"I would have kept it from you if I could, John," she murmured.

He smiled. "But you could not. You are too thorough a woman."

"It would have been easier for us both if I could."

"It isn't possible for you to deceive me, Anna. You are not that kind of woman."

She looked at him quickly, strangely. "If I were to deceive you, John, and the time would come when you would find it out, would you forgive me?" she asked.

He was silent for a moment. "A love like mine pardons a great deal," he replied, at length. He studied her gravely for a moment, then he smiled. "I have no fear of your deceiving me, Anna. You couldn't do it."

"You are right," she said, very simply. "I couldn't do it. That is why I must send you away, John. Let us part now and—forever."

"If I yield to your wish, Anna, I shall be a very unhappy, discontented man. If I did not know that you cared for me I could in time forget you, cease to regret you. My life will be a very busy one. I am an ambitious man. I want to win success." A resolute look settled over his face, as he added, "I shall win it."

"I am sure you will," declared Anna. She paused a moment and then added very sadly, "And you will marry a woman worthier than I to share that success."

"There is no woman worthier than you," John said firmly. She looked at him with an expression in her eyes he could not fathom. He took her hand very gently in his. "Since I have known and loved you, Anna, I have grown more ambitious. My desire to make a success in life has strengthened. A good woman alone, dear, could so inspire the man who love her. I cannot part with you forever, Anna, without knowing why it must be. It is too much to expect of me. You must let me use my own judgment."

With a sigh she gave up the struggle. "Very well," she said, "let it be as you wish."

"That's right," exclaimed John, cheerily. "Now, tell me!" For a moment she was silent, then she turned to him very pale. "I can't tell you now," she murmured. "Give me a little time."

"Certainly," he said gently, a little surprised at her distress. "Shall I go away and return later?"

"Yes, please," murmured Anna.

"All right, I'll go and come back in about half an hour," said John as he turned away.

She followed him. "John!"

He turned back. She went to him, lifting her face.

"Kiss me, John."

He bent his head and kissed her. She stood watching him very sadly as he went across the footbridge.

Martha came out of the house. "Why, has Mr. Raleigh gone, dearie?" she exclaimed.

Anna turned. "Yes," she replied.

"Why, what's the matter?" Martha asked as she came toward Anna.

"Oh, mother, it is so hard to give him up!" murmured Anna with a half sob. "My love! my love!"

"Why, what do you mean, dearie?" asked Martha. She sat down on the bench and drew Anna down beside her.

"Mother, John Raleigh has asked me to be his wife," said Anna.

"Why, I don't see nothin' in that to make you so downhearted," exclaimed Martha, playfully.

"Don't you, mother?" murmured Anna, sadly.

"I hope you done said 'yes' to him?"

Anna shook her head.

"You ain't sent him away?" exclaimed Martha, in consternation. "Don't you love him?"

"I love him, mother, but I cannot marry him without telling him the truth about myself," Anna answered. Martha shook her head disapprovingly. "And when he knows he will no longer wish to marry me."

"You ain't called upon to tell him, Anna," protested Martha. "You was taken advantage of. It oughtn't to be held ag'in you."

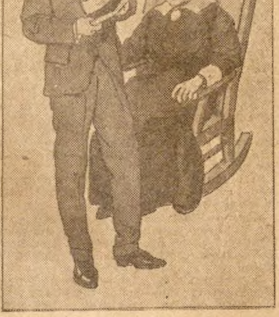
"I fear it will be held against me, mother," said Anna.

"I reckon it warn't held ag'in that thar man that wronged you," declared Martha. "I don't reckon as he would feel called upon to tell a woman he was goin' to marry that he'd wronged a young girl."

Anna smiled faintly. "No, I do not think that he would," she acquiesced.

"No self-respectin' girl ought to marry a man like that," declared Martha.

"No, but they do, mother! There are some women, perhaps, who wouldn't marry a man like that if they knew about him, but I doubt if there are many." She paused for a moment. "I was that man's stenographer. I was young, innocent, ignorant of the world, of men. He was clever, subtle, unscrupulous, pitiless. What chance had I against him?" She bowed her head. "How cruel the world is to the unhappy woman who falls." She lifted her hand with a passionate gesture. "Ah, Heaven! how cruel and pitiless!"


'Thank God, she did not fall!"

"And that thar man didn't do nothin' to help you in your troubles?" queried Martha.

"He offered to provide for me on one condition—that I would continue to be—not a good woman."

"He ought to 'a' been ashamed of hisself," exclaimed Martha, indignantly.

"I refused," continued Anna. "He offered some money. I did not take it. I should have done so, perhaps, for I was in sore need. But I could not bring myself to take money from—him. I went out from his office leaving the money on my desk where he had tossed it. A few days after that my landlady told me that she couldn't have me in her home any longer, that I must go."

"The heartless critter!" cried Martha, indignantly.

"She wasn't exactly heartless," said Anna. "She was simply looking out for her own interests. The other lodgers would not have remained if she had kept me. I found myself homeless in the city. Homeless in the city!" Something like a wail crept into her voice. "And without a friend! Oh, the desolation, the despair of it! A great longing came over me for the country, to get away from the cold, cruel city. I had a little money. I spent it all for a railway ticket. It was night when I reached the small station to which I had bought my ticket. I left the train. I followed a road leading away into the country. The moon was shining. A feeling of peace stole over me. I followed a road leading into a wood. A hand seemed beckoning me on. I followed the path. It was dark in the woods. Suddenly I came again out into the silvery moonlight. Before me was a footbridge across a stream. On the other side of that stream was a house. It was there I found—you!" She put her arms tenderly about Martha. "I found that which is so rare in this world—Christian charity. You took me in. I can never repay you for all that you have done for me. But God, who loves Christian charity, will reward you."

"Hiram and me don't want no reward, dearie," said Martha, kissing the girl's delicately tinted cheek. "You war a comfort to us in our sorrow. You've been like a daughter to us. I don't know what Hiram and me would 'a'done without you."

"I shall never leave you," declared Anna.

"Oh, we ain't that selfish, dearie! We don't reckon on keepin' you with us right 'long. You'll be gittin' married one of these fine days." Anna shook her head. "'Course you will. Come here, Hiram," she exclaimed, as her husband came out of the house and joined them. "Anna and me would like to have yo' opinion on a leetle matter we jest don't agree on." Hiram glanced questioningly from one to the other. "John Raleigh, he's done asked Anna to marry him."

"Sho 'nough?" murmured Hiram, with a questioning glance at Anna. He did not appear to share his wife's complacency.

"Anna 'lows she thinks a lot of John Raleigh," continued Martha. "But she won't say 'yes' to him. Hiram nodded his head understandingly. "Anna 'lows she won't marry John Raleigh 'ceptin' he's fust told 'bout that thar trouble of hers."

"Well, now, Marthy, I reckon Anna's about right," said Hiram.

"Why, Hiram Briggs, who'd 'a' thought as you'd be the one to go ag'in Anna's happiness," cried Martha.

"You know I wouldn't do nothin' like that, don't you, honey?" queried Hiram, with a tender glance at Anna.

Anna smiled. "Yes, father, and I think mother knows it, too," she replied.

"Hiram be encouragin' you in yo' foolishness, Anna," declared Martha, outdone.

"Foolishness, mother?" murmured Anna, in a pained voice.

"Well, dearie, that's the way it looks to me," said Martha, deprecatingly. "I don't see no call to be tellin' John Raleigh 'bout yo' trouble."

"It's the honestest thing to do, ma!" declared Hiram.

"Bein' as you both ag'in me, I ain't got no mo' to say," said Martha, dejectedly.

"Now, ma, don't you be feelin' bad 'bout this heah," soothed Hiram, patting her affectionately on the shoulder. "Anna and me ain't ag'in you. Be we, honey?"

"No, indeed!" replied Anna. She paused a moment. "Only mother doesn't quite understand."

"That's owin' to her bein' so tender-hearted," declared Hiram. "I reckon ma and the world don't agree on many p'ints."

"Father, it is only fair to tell John Raleigh," said Anna. "You believe that, do you not?"

"Yes, honey," replied Hiram. "It's the fair thing to do, the way I sees it."

"Anna 'lows John Raleigh won't want to marry her arter he knows," said Martha, dolefully.

Hiram looked grave, "I am afeard he won't."

Martha shook her head despondently.

"He'll be back in a little while," said Anna. "And I must tell him why I will not promise to become his wife. I promised him that I would explain."

"It's a mighty hard thing for you to do, honey," murmured Hiram, sympathetically.

Anna's head drooped. "Yes, it is very hard."

"P'raps you'd like fo' me to tell him?" queried Hiram.

"Oh, father, will you?" cried Anna, eagerly.

"Why, 'course I will," replied Hiram.

"Let me tell him," said Martha. They both looked at her in surprise. "I want to tell him how good and sweet and true our Anna be," she added, a little tremulously.

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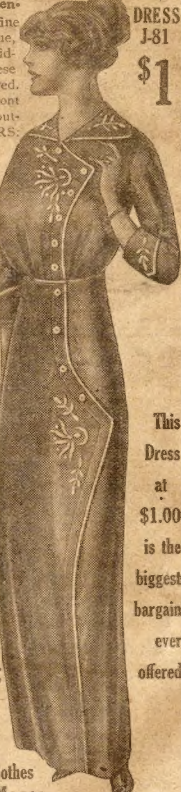

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"Dearest mother!" murmured Anna, with tears in her eyes.

"Mabbe if I tell him that he won't hold that trouble of Anna's ag'in' her," added Martha, hopefully.

"Mabbe not, ma! mabbe not!" declared Hiram. He turned to Anna. "Shall we let ma tell John Raleigh, honey?"

"Yes."

Anna arose, kissed Martha with great tenderness and passed into the house.

"Po' girl!" murmured Hiram, shaking his head.

"Hiram, you don't reckon as John Raleigh won't want to marry Anna after he knows?" queried Martha, anxiously.

"I am mightily afeard he won't, Marthy," Hiram replied.

"But he loves her," Martha reminded him.

"I ain't denyin' that, Marthy," Hiram went toward the house as he spoke. "But it's got to be a mighty big and gen'rous love to stand ag'in' what you're goin' to tell him."

He passed into the house as John Raleigh appeared at the footbridge. He crossed the footbridge and came up to Martha, smilingly, lifting his hat.

"Good morning, Mrs. Briggs!"

"Good mo'nin' to you, Mr. Raleigh," Martha was nervous. "It be a fine day!"

"A perfect day! The country is so beautiful. I regret that I must go back to the city."

"You be goin' soon?"

"Yes, in a few days."

"We'll all be missin' you!"

"Thank you! I shall always remember gratefully how kind you have all been to me." He paused a moment and then added, with feeling, "I have been very happy here."

"Mabbe you'll be comin' back soon?"

John Raleigh smiled. "Indeed, I hope to do so," he said. He turned to her, a little gravely. "It rests with your daughter, Mrs. Briggs, whether I return or not. I love her. I have asked her to become my wife."

"Anna cares a lot for you, Mr. Raleigh," said Martha.

"She admitted that she loved me. But I was unable to win her consent to become my wife. She declares there is a reason for this." He paused with a questioning look at Martha. She avoided his eyes, clasping and unclasping her hands nervously. John Raleigh went on to tell her what she had already learned from Anna. He glanced a little impatiently toward the house, as he concluded.

"Anna 'lowed as she'd ruther I'd tell you, Mr. Raleigh," said Martha.

"Oh, did she?" exclaimed John Raleigh, turning toward her expectantly. "Well, what is it?"

"I reckon you ain't never heard that Anna ain't our own daughter, Mr. Raleigh?" queried Martha.

John Raleigh looked surprised. "Why, no," he replied. "I have never heard that. I thought she was your own daughter."

"She be only our 'dopted daughter," Martha explained. "But Hiram and me love her same as though she war our own." John nodded his head understandingly. "We jest couldn't help from lovin' Anna, she's so good!"

"I know she is—God bless her!" said John.

"Hiram and me bless the day she come to us, Mr. Raleigh. She'd make a true, faithful, loving wife. You couldn't find nobody who would make a better wife or a tenderer mother for your children than our Anna."

"I agree with you there," said John Raleigh, heartily. He looked at Martha and smiled. "It's evident, Mrs. Briggs, that you see no reason why Anna should not become my wife?"

"No, I see no reason why Anna should not marry you, Mr. Raleigh."

"Now, there! I was right!" exclaimed John. "There isn't any!"

"But Anna doesn't think 'bout it as I do. And mabbe you won't nuther," amended Martha.

"Tell me what it is," smiled John. The light way in which he treated the matter made it harder for Martha to tell him.

"It's nigh onto fo' years since Anna come to us," she began. "She was a po' girl what had to work fo' her livin'. She'd knowed hardship and sorrow and trouble. The man she worked fo' in the city as a stenographer war a bad man." John grew a little graver and regarded her attentively.

"And he—he——" she stopped

You mean that he was a scoundrel," said John.

Martha inclined her head.

"He war a mighty bad man!"

"I think I understand," said John after a moment. "He made improper advances to Anna." Martha looked at him in a half-frightened way as she nodded her head. "That is nothing unusual. Such cases are, unfortunately, only too common in the cities. I suppose Anna was forced to give up her position?" Again Martha nodded. "Women are often deprived of the means of making a livelihood by just such scoundrels as that. I suppose Anna had to leave the city to escape that man's persecution. This white slave abomination makes the ruin of unprotected girls a comparatively easy matter. And Anna found a home, a refuge with you?"

"Yes, she found a home with us," murmured Martin, at loss how to proceed.

"Thank God! she did not fall a victim to that scoundrel!" cried John Raleigh.

Martha looked at him and opened her lips to speak.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

"DON'T!"

I might have just the mostest fun
  If 'twasn't for a word,
I think the very worstest one
  'At ever I have heard.
I wish 'at it 'd go away,
  But I'm afraid it won't;
I s'pose 'at it 'll always stay—
  That awful word of "don't."

It's "don't you make a bit of noise,"
  And "don't go out of door;"
And "don't you spread your stock of toys
  About the parlor floor;"
And "don't you dare play in the dust;"
  And "don't you tease the cat;"
And "don't you get your clothing mussed;"
  And "don't." do this and that.

It seems to me I've never found
  A thing I'd like to do
But what there's some one close around
  'At's got a "don't" or two.
And Sunday—'at's the day 'at "don't"
  Is worst of all the seven.
Oh, goodness! but I hope there won't
  Be any "don't" in Heaven!

* * *

A TRIAL.

Sometimes I'm full of woe.
  Most bitter is my cup,
When mamma cries, "Sit down,"
  And pa says, "Do sit up!"

* * *

Tot Wit.

Mother—"Why, Lola, aren't you asleep yet?"

Little Lola—"Not quite, mamma; but one of my feet is."

—

Teacher—"Now, Minnie, what comes after 'q'?"

Minnie (learning the alphabet)—"Oh, I know—cumber."

—

Small Edna gazed thoughtfully into her grandmother's wrinkled face. "Grandma," she said, "I'd like to have seen your face when it was green."

—

"Look there, papa," exclaimed small Allen, pointing to a dromedary in the circus parade, "that must be the camel that had the last straw put on his back."

—

Small Edna—"What do they have a 'best man' at a wedding for?"

Little Joe—"Oh, they have him there to take the bridegroom's place in case he backs out."

—

"My papa's a bookkeeper," said little Johnny, proudly.

"Yes, I know it," rejoined small Edna. "He borrowed a book of my papa six months ago and hasn't returned it."

—

Small Bessie had been taken in to see her new baby brother for the first time.

"How do you like him?" asked papa.

"Fine!" replied Bessie. "I was getting awfully tired of sawdust dolls, and I'm glad we've got a real meat one at last."

—

"Papa," said small Harold, "why is it you say a long prayer and I say a short prayer?"

"Because you are not old enough to learn a long prayer, Harold," he replied.

"Oh," said the little fellow, "I thought it was 'cause I wasn't big enough to be as wicked as you are."

—

Little Francesca had been asking innumerable questions and finally her father grew impatient and said: 'Oh, Francesca, I can't answer half the questions you ask!"

"I know you can't, papa," she replied, "but I don't know which half you can't answer unless I ask them."

—

"Now, Johnny," said the Sunday school teacher, "can you tell me why the lions did not eat Daniel?"

"I guess the circus man had just fed 'em," answered Johnny.

—

"Tommy," queried the teacher of a small boy in the juvenile class, "what is a swan?"

"A swan," replied the youthful observer, "is an animal with a turkey's body, a giraffe's neck and a goose's head."

—

"Oh, dear!" sighed little Mabel. "I'm having an awful time with my dollie."

"How's that?" queried her mother.

"She's so cross I can't do a thing with her," answered Mabel. "I guess she must be hatching her teeth."

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The Signs in Red

Or, The Hereside Mystery

By William H. Manning

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Begun in No. 7, February 14. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS BLOW.

BORROWDALE'S estate was one of several hundred acres, and this, together with contiguous property, was covered in part with forests of great age. Wealthy residents in the town had never been charmed by the call of the timber-men, and, as a result, patriarchal trees towered where they had stood generations back. Entering this region, grand and beautiful when one was in normal mood, but certainly gloomy to an explorer with upset nerves, I was soon like one lost to the busy earth.

My friend's directions proved very helpful, and I made my way as softfooted as possible, seeking the shanties he had described. The first I found easily, but it gave me no enlightenment. Put up, I believed, by some wood-chopper on a small scale, it was bare and falling into decay. Close inspection showed no object of interest inside, and no tracks there or near at hand. After this failure came two others, leaving only one shack on the Borrowdale property to be seen.

I finally neared it with my first caution and interest largely gone, for I was seeing clearly that I was banking on a single chance in many, and my mind ran more on Borrowdale's luck with the gate-tender. As he had said, modern criminals often used automobiles in their nefarious work, for nothing else enabled them to get away so quickly, safely, and neatly.

I grew a bit more alert when I finally found the shack. It was as old and unpromising as the others, but I moved to the door with light steps and attentive eyes, the revolver ready for use. The door hung sagging from the one remaining hinge, but I pushed it aside and looked in. Nobody was there, and it might have been overlooked for years by the rest of mankind.

Previously, I had been sharply observing, going down on my knees to search for minute signs, but this time I stood erect and gazed in half-scornful indifference. Why should the family foes come there? Granted that it was a good hiding-place, it was not impregnable——

Then I saw something and dropped to my knees. I picked up a bit of paper that was clearly for writing purposes, and still clean. I carried it to the stronger light at the door. It was a fragment scarcely five inches square, but words were written upon it. I ran them over, finding no continuity of expression, but isolated markings, exactly as a scribbling child might write.

"House, barn, dog, tree, meeting, entrance——"

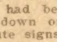
They and others were there, not connected as I set them down here, nor yet in a line, but scattered erratically. Yet, I was wrapped up in the survey, for the writing—my thoughts broke off as, after wading through perhaps two score words, I took in the final ones.

"Tonight, delay, Borrowdale, knot——"

Except for an odd flourish that was all, but it was much. For the writing was the same found in the communications of my friend's mysterious enemy.

I had found something. I had the loose end of a riddle in my grasp and it might be far more. The family foe had been in the shack, had used his pen idly, scribbling at random—or was it with more definite purpose? The last two words carried food for thought along with them, being a combination not to be overlooked—"Borrowdale, Knot!" It fell into line too readily to be chance.

Pocketing the paper, I knelt again, this time to look for footprints, but when my knee encountered a hard object, I gave attention first of all to see what was troubling me. I saw, and forgot the trouble. Picking it up I had a trophy. It was a piece of rope formed into this shape.



My search had not been in vain, I exultantly told myself. I had found the home of the gang, for here they must live, and here we would visit them and have a settlement with heavy hands. Caught in their own quarters——

I had a sudden doubt and looked about me critically. Footprints must be numerous, I argued. There I erred. At the end of ten minutes I had hunted the interior over and the immediate vicinity outside, and no track had I found, neither ashes of a fire, nor bits of food, nor any other sign such as would be left by campers, lawless or peaceful.

It was not readily to be understood, but I could do no more than surmise that I had happened on a place where they had stopped briefly, and then gone on to another spot. Where was that spot?

Two hours later I was obliged to confess that I could find nothing more, so, as the hour when I was to meet Borrowdale again was at hand, I left the woods and reached the road.

I was at the exact spot where we were to meet, but my friend was not there. Finding the outward track of his car and failing to see its return marks, I started to meet it, listening for its peculiar blast. Perhaps I had gone a quarter of a mile when, passing a slight curve, I had something to look at that startled me. Borrowdale's car stood empty by the wayside, its forward part thrust into a fringe of bushes.

I ran forward only to meet with another shock. Near the car its master lay in the ditch with no visible sign of life. I lost no time in kneeling by his side and feeling for heartbeats, and relief was great when I found that vital organ clicking away in a normal manner. Far from being dead, Borrowdale was simply unconscious, and, though he was a most careful operator, I attributed his mishap to an accident in which his machine was the guilty party.

A brook near by told me in mute fashion what to do, but I paused for a moment by the car. Why was it not wrecked? Why had the mischance that had dealt so harshly with him left it, as it proved to be, without a broken part? Yes, and who had shut off the power so perfectly?

Bringing water I used it freely, and Borrowdale soon sat up. After that suspended powers returned to proper action readily, and we were soon talking.

"I struck my head against something," he explained, "and got a bad blow. I was not immediately stunned, but my head whirled like a top, and, seeing that consciousness was going, I shut off and—that's all I remember. I can now see that my car ran its momentum out and then glided lightly into these bushes."

"Struck your head?" I repeated in wonder. "Against what?"

"I don't know. I saw nothing."

"Were you outside the road?"

"Oh! no, no! I don't motor in the woods."

"Yet, you think you ran your head into a natural obstruction?"

"What else could it be? Perhaps I was a bit careless. You see, a man crossed the road only a few yards ahead of me, or, to be more precise, I discovered him just as the bushes were closing after him. He was a stranger, and I turned my head to look, wondering if he was some city man out gunning. It must have been about opposite where I saw him that I got my blow."

"A stranger, you say? What was he like?"

"I can only say he was slender of build, black-haired, and swarthy, and one of those city chaps who are catlike in their motions."

I had a curious thrill. His description perfectly fitted the man I had conjured up from my overwrought imagination as the family foe, my day-dream man.

"Let's look for what you ran into," I said quickly.

We took the back-track. It was easy to see where the car had begun to get out of control, as its track was wabbly, but the limbs of the trees, the only thing Borrowdale could have run into, hung five feet above where his head would be when he sat in the car. These limbs claimed an alibi and proved their case.

A hundred feet beyond, one limb did certainly sag low, and my friend, assuming that he had held the car steady for that distance, stoutly asserted that it was what he had hit. With pertinacity that surprised him. I insisted that he should run the machine back and experiment, and he did. Sitting in his proper place he had a good twelve inches of room under the limb, which could not possibly touch his head.

"Just as I thought!" I said. "You had your blow from human hands, and the slender, black-haired man was one of the gang. Yes, and he is one of the scoundrels that are turning Hereside mansion into a place of terror!"

CHAPTER IX.

SEEN AT NIGHT.

BORROWDALE laughed at my theory, and we then had a rather lengthy argument. To my objection that the limb of the tree could not hit him he theorized a possible jar and leap of the car, or a chance breeze that swayed the obstruction, or possibly a bear in the

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tree whose weight had brought the limb down; and when I clung to my belief in a blow from a man, he declined to credit that anybody could climb into the tonneau without his knowing it.

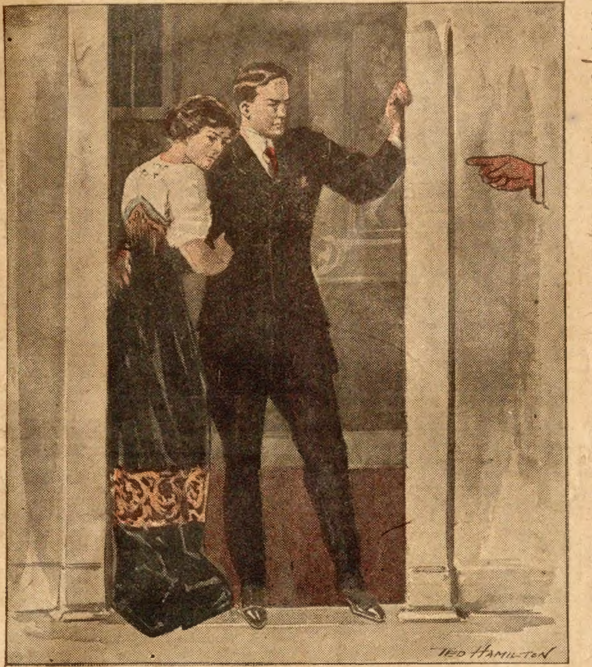
On my part I challenged all he said, insisted upon the human agency, and would not have the limb held blamable. Only lack of time prevented me from reentering the woods, and as Borrowdale had really been affected by my discoveries in the hut he grew more soberminded as we drove home, still in discussion. How had he received the blow?

Entering the driveway to Hereside, I remembered my day-dream man, and abruptly asked:

"You are sure you never before saw the man who crossed the road?"

"I certainly never did," he replied.

That stopped talk for then, for he was "honking" our arrival to the family, but I found myself as wedded to my idea as ever. Behind the board in the old wing was the torn letter of the man who had sworn he would "come again," and I believed he had done it. If Borrowdale did not know him by sight, all the worse for us. And if the "son of the sea" was alive, he was as full of mischief as ever.



We searched the old wing together.

Nothing disastrous had happened at the house while we were away, and our next gathering at the diningroom table found all hands in outwardly cheerful spirits. We ignored haunting troubles by unspoken consent, and managed to indulge in a measure of verbal lightness, and to punctuate it with an occasional laugh. As far as I was concerned, all this was forced and unnatural, but I had my part to play.

I went to my room briefly, and on leaving it I happened upon Mrs. Corbin, the housekeeper. Miami had been telling me that that lady was proving herself a tower of support, using her executive ability to run the house smoothly, and giving comfort and courage to all; so, knowing that the facts known to Borrowdale's daughter had been laid before her, I had an impulse to accost her.

"Mrs. Corbin," I said, "we seem to have a breathing spell in the house. By that I mean we have no new alarm."

"Don't you think, sir, that trouble is over with?" she returned.

"If so, why has there been any trouble? The scoundrels do not seem to have got what they wanted."

"What did they want—if I may inquire?"

"I wish that could be answered as easily as asked, but I don't know. Their wishes are shrouded in darkness."

"I will not venture an opinion where the master has failed, sir, but it seems to me it has been a matter of malicious mischief. If so, nobody would continue it, for detection would be a severe punishment for the privilege of being silly."

If I had known less about circumstances not revealed to her, she would have almost convinced me with her logic. She had a way of looking at one calmly, steadily, and yet mildly that carried force with it, and I could credit the family belief that she was an exceedingly capable person. I made a mental note of this fact, for if there was a crisis her cool head and good judgment would give us, in time of need, a helper perhaps far more valuable than a man.

"You may be right," I said. "Certainly, I hope there will be no more intrusions."

"How can they enter with all points so well guarded at night?"

Then I tried an experiment. Laughing lightly, I asked:

"You don't suppose there is a secret underground passage, do you?"

"No," she replied thoughtfully, and with a shake of her head. "I cannot credit that. As you are in the family confidence, I will admit that, having long been at service here, I have heard the legend of such a secret way. Old John Tynan, a servant who died some ten years ago, often spoke to me of the legend, though to nobody else. I never believed in it."

"Which means that you never saw anything pointing that way?"

"I never did, sir."

I was a trifle annoyed that everything heard from authoritative sources was against my belief, and, as I had stopped her for an entirely different purpose, I changed the subject.

"Miss Borrowdale tells me she had informed you of Ober's claim that he saw a young woman from this house talking with the man in sailor dress, or, I should say, supposedly from this house."

"Yes, sir, she told me."

"What do you think?"

"I cannot credit it, sir."

"We have three such young women here. Miss Borrowdale, herself, is to be eliminated. What about Esther and Delia, the maids?"

"I will answer you as I answered Miss Miami, for she and I talked until the subject was well threshed out. The maids are honest, faithful, well-meaning girls, and that they have guilty knowledge of our foes I cannot believe. No, sir; I can't think ill of either girl."

Her decided stand was a new check to my belief, but I persisted for some time, finally dropping the point beaten but dissatisfied. Like Ober I thought one of our people had been with the sailor, and the idea would not down.

Borrowdale and I slept until eleven o'clock, and then took up our night's work. First of all we made the rounds of the house. This was no agreeable matter, since all lights were out, but we went from room to room, taking heed to our male watchers and, more especially, looking from the windows with the keenest scrutiny possible.

"Not so much as a leaf astir," said Borrowdale.

"An enemy would not come into the open part of the grounds and dance a jig," I retorted.

"He would be a foolish man if he did," was the laughing reply.

"Don't be lured into too much confidence, sir."

"My dear Saywood, my confidence is in you and my faithful men."

"And mine in you."

"Thank you, thank you. Well, I'll to my own post. Good night!"

He went away, and after a reciprocal jest as he accidentally collided with the imperfectly opened door, I heard his steps die away in the distance.

My post, by my own desire, was in the old wing. It was the point where an intruder by a secret passage must emerge, and I wanted first chance at him. My helper was a farmhand named Tarkley, an honest, slow-witted fellow of great strength, and when I had arranged a plan to suit me, we took up our patrol of the ancient rooms.

I recall as an odd accompaniment of the night that I was never able, when walking, to pass the board behind which was concealed the torn letter of the "son of the sea" without involuntarily pausing. His evil words almost invested him with life and action, and much I wondered who and what he had been. He had threatened to "come again," and in hostility. What had been his deadly enmity? Was he dead, or living and still bent on his purpose to "come again?"

Finding these meditations harmful to my vigilance, I tried to put them aside, but when next I passed the board the old train of thought attacked me.

Perhaps it was because of my partial inattention that the first discovery of the night came from Tarkley. Patrolling, I had failed to meet him as usual, but in another room I saw him flattened against the side of the window.

"Somebody outside, sir," he whispered.

"What?" I exclaimed.

"Look by those hickory trees, sir."

I looked, at first without results, after which the darkness seemed to move. Surely, there was motion there, and I grew keenly interested. Pains had been taken that none of our animals should have freedom of movement, and that stir was important. Then the darkness was punctured by darker shapes that were unmistakable.

"Men!" Tarkley whispered.

He was right. They were men, and they were moving toward the house.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW TURN.

I STOOD and watched the moving group like one fascinated, though my mind was clear and I missed nothing.

"Three men!" said Tarkley, softly.

"Yes," I agreed.

"They carry a ladder, so they must intend to climb up here."

The unknown trio skulked along where the shadows of the sparse trees fell heaviest, but they neared the house steadily.

"The darkness of the house has deceived them," the farmhand added.

It did seem like it, but I was surprised. After the blows they had dealt us they could hardly expect us to lie and sleep like clods, yet they were going about their work deliberately, and, it might almost be said, openly, for a watcher was sure to see them.

Then I had a theory to account for it. Perhaps they intended to have speech with Borrowdale tonight. If so, a new plan was afoot.

Bold as they were in a way, they got to the wall of the house with the lightness of the shadows they used as cover. I gave my helper a few directions, and we stood quiet where we were, well hidden.

"Why," suddenly muttered Tarkley, "they are putting the ladder up to this very window!"

They were, and, as it must be they were ignorant of our position, it was something like the irony of fate. The head of the ladder brushed the lower part of the window. I added a final word

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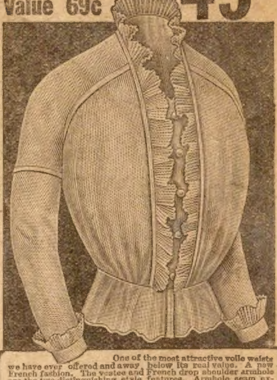

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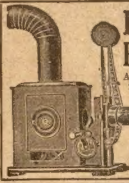

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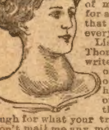

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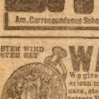

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to Tarkley, and then silence fell between us.

We could not look out again, but I saw the ladder move a little and knew that somebody was coming up softly. I had already unbolted the window to give them free access, and I promised myself that he would find as warm a welcome as he desired.

After a little delay a head appeared outside the glass, and its owner took a long, careful survey. Really, there was nothing but darkness to be seen, but the silence probably led him to believe his way was clear.

He raised the sash quietly, paused again, and then turned and waved his hand. Then his leg came over and he swung himself stealthily into the place. The next moment something happened.

Tarkley and I moved together. He swung his arms around the intruder with all of his great strength in the grip, while I closed one hand upon his mouth and the other on his throat.

He leaped like a snared animal, but could neither free himself nor sound an alarm. We bore him back, and, holding his throat shut, I crammed my wadded handkerchief hard into his mouth, and tied him with stout cord I carried.

When this was accomplished I ventured a look outside. The other men stood at the foot of the ladder, but I could tell nothing more. Their capture now became my ruling desire, and I slipped away to notify Borrowdale and see that a force of our men was sent outside to cut off possible retreat. I had barely explained the situation when there was an alarm. A rattle and clash of broken glass sounded in the room I had left.

"Something wrong!" I cried. "Come!"

We ran, and found Tarkley growling disgust and threatening his prisoner.

"He got one hand loose somehow, Mr. Saywood," was the explanation, "and just flung something he must have had in his pocket and it smashed the glass. The other fellows have run."

I hurried to the window and found that the last words were unfortunately true. The ladder was still in place, but no human being was to be seen.

"I'll go down and pursue——"

Borrowdale interrupted me.

"No, no, Saywood. You might as well chase a shooting star as to set out after them in the dark, and there would be a good-sized chance of your getting killed. No man here shall go. Let us be content with what we have already bagged. A light, Tarkley!"

The light was soon made, and we looked at our prisoner. He lay quietly, looking up at us, a rather muscular, middle-aged fellow, with a face so ugly that it should have been grateful to the beard that covered the chin.

He had unusually bright eyes, and as he regarded us with perfect composure they seemed to be reading us carefully. Far from being an intellectual person, he had a species of intelligence that did not hide the fact that he was of a low class. I took the gag from his mouth.

"So you got into trouble?" began Borrowdale, calmly.

"I surely did, old man!" was the prompt rejoinder. "Rather sized this ranch up wrong, so to speak."

"Who are you?"

"Columbus, Junior!" and the housebreaker grinned humorously.

"What did you want here?"

"To discover an unknown land."

"What more have you to say for yourself?"

"Ask your questions and I'll answer them all. Fire away!"

"What I want most is to know your real name."

"It's mighty impolite to say that after I've told you. Was the first Columbus used that way? Why can't I have as good treatment?"

"Who were your companions?"

"Now, then, governor, don't ask that. Shall I give away other explorers? Ethics forbid! Confine yourself to me."

All this he said with his bright eyes turned up and his rascal face twinkling with its smile as the eyes twinkled. A novel knave, surely; but, as I could see, a hopeless subject for the clearing up of mysteries. Words flowed from him in a stream, but they amounted to nothing. With his sharp wits he was well guarded from self-betrayal.

Borrowdale had this view, but he did not give up hope until he had asked further questions and met with no success. Then he turned to Tarkley and curtly changed his course.

"Search him!" was his order.

The prisoner grinned and said nothing. Our man went through his pockets. Worthless articles of the conventional sort were developed at the beginning, a pocket-knife, a key and the like, but this triviality did not continue. A revolver and a double-edged dagger gave us a sight of his sort, and then came the final discovery.

From an inner pocket a sailor's cap was produced. The intruder looked at it unblinkingly, but Borrowdale and I exchanged glances. Then my host spoke to me in a low voice.

"Bring Ober and see if he can identify him," he directed.

We had the gardener there in a few minutes, and he looked the prisoner over carefully. It had been arranged that he should, as a preliminary, merely nod or shake his head. Now, he nodded, and Borrowdale resumed operations with our captive.

"Where," he asked, "have you served as a sailor?"

"Never," was the placid reply.

"This cap is that of a sailor or a marine on a warship."

"Quite likely you are right, but I don't know a warship from a tug with the influenza."

"Then how did you come by this cap?"

"Found it!"

"Where?"

"If I told you you would know as much about it as I do. For once, let me sidestep your sifting-box. Found it! That's all."

"My man, I know a good deal already. You have acted the burglar here before, but before entering you had an interview with a woman in a remoter part of my grounds. It was Thursday evening, and you stood and talked with her near a large tree. Who was the woman?"

"Do you expect me to give a friend away?" and the fellow grinned in his usual way. "And a woman at that! Not I!"

"I will make you an offer," Borrowdale continued. "Divulge all freely, telling me who your male confederates are and where I can find them, and who the woman was—I know she belonged to my household—and you shall never suffer from the law. I will enter no complaint against you."

"Mr. Rich Man," was the tantalizing response, "you ask me too much. There is honor among thieves—sometimes. I respectfully decline your offer. If you want the others you mention, go and get them. That's all. Bring me a pillow and I'll take a nap. I'm sleepy. Good night!"

CHAPTER XI.

I HEAR AND SEE.

THE prisoner closed his eyes, yawned, and lay quiet, and after a sharp glance Borrowdale took Ober aside.

"Is he the man you saw with the young woman the other night?" was the question.

"Well, sir," the gardener replied, "I can't say positive, since it was in the dark I saw them, but this man has the same build and the same beard, and then there's the sailor cap."

"My query was only a matter of form," Borrowdale added. "There is, of course, no way to doubt. Now, Saywood, what's to be done? We have this fellow and he won't talk. He does not help us to

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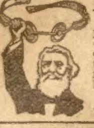

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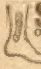

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get information, and, if I read him rightly, never will. Too much stubborn grit."

"Yes," I agreed.

"What do you make of him?"

"A city tough. He has little education, but his associates have sharpened his wits into something that's a substitute for education. That means a city product, and that's what he is. Further, he is a dangerous man. Don't misunderstand that grin of his. If his interests were to be served by doing it, he would murder without a prick of conscience."

"My opinion is in line with yours. Still, Saywood, we don't seem to have profited as much by his seizure as we ought. We have one of the gang, but what are we to do about it? Yes, and how are we benefited?"

"We can hardly expect him to confess at once. That will come later. Get him to the police station——"

"No!" the master of Hereside interrupted quickly. "I shall not turn him over to the police. I have important reasons for not—well, why bother them with my private war? No police for me!"

Probably my face expressed the wonder I felt, and again that old wave of suspicion came over me. More than ever I felt that Borrowdale was hiding something from me, and that he could tell why this campaign was made against him. It was strange and very disquieting.

"I'll keep the scoundrel here," he added.

"Can you do that?"

"Why not? A room can soon be made strong enough, and then I have guards. Again, his presence will doubtless lure the others back to try a rescue."

"Well, if you think best——"

"I do think so, Saywood. This is no longer a war in which I am quiescent, but one where I do my share of the fighting. Yes, I'll fight them to the bitter end!"

He took a short turn around the room, and I could not help feeling admiration for his resolute courage. Nevertheless, I longed to have a good detective on the case.

Tarkley approached and requested permission to go in search of the men who had escaped, adding that he believed he could identify one of the pair by his figure, having noticed that he was very slight of build. I felt like drawing from the store of information and adding that he was dark-faced and black-haired, but, instead, I merely said I would like to accompany the farmhand.

"We will consider that point later," Borrowdale replied. "Of course, nothing can be done tonight. Now, this prisoner of ours! His wish to get sleep may be a trick or partly true, but he will get none. I'll sit by him and have it out with the reptile through the night. Maybe I shall be able to get a confession. Saywood, I give you full charge of the house for the hours to come. Patrol as you think best, stimulate Pierson, Johnson, and the others to vigilance, and generally act as if you were master here. I'll stay alone with the self-styled Columbus, but you can come to me in the morning."

The wave of his hand signified dismissal, and we went. As I took a backward look I saw him in a chair, close by the intruder's side, and the look on my host's face was far from peaceful. I suspected he would give his lawless companion a bad hour or two, but there was something more—I could not tell what—that disquieted me sorely. The grim, relentless face was that of a new Borrowdale. If he was really hiding something from me as to the motive of the gang—but why speculate? I went, leaving him glaring at the captive.

Taking up my new duties I performed them to the best of my ability. I found all our guards alert and attentive to duty, while the outlying region was as quiet as if plots and mystery had no part at Hereside. Perhaps there was no danger of further trouble that night.

I listened at the doors of the ladies of the house, and though no breathing reached me, I felt assured that they were resting well. This was well. They were happier than if they knew of the strange man in the old wing.

Night drew along until but two hours of darkness remained. Twice I had ventured soft-footed to the old wing and found Borrowdale as I left him, but finally went for a third look.

The murmur of voices reached me before I was in sight, but I stole to the door and peered in. Borrowdale was sitting with his back to me, and, for the first time, the prisoner was apparently interested. He had come to a sitting position, too, and was looking at something in his host's hand.

It was a picture of the sort made in the previous generation, and known as a daguerreotype, but I could see no more than that it was the likeness of a man. Borrowdale's voice came to me lightly but clearly.

"He went to sea at an early age, and was passionately fond of it, so fond that I cannot imagine his forsaking it. If you have been a sailor you must have seen him, or you would not know of the signs in red. In old times he used to scribble them on the walls of this ancient wing, a wayward freak of his. Now, if you will tell me whether your leader is the right age——"

"But," growled the prisoner, "I've already told you he is not."

"I want the truth. This man—I must decline to confide in you freely, but he was a kinsman—surely knew some of your party. Unless he is your leader, then your leader knew him. Now, tell me——"

The prisoner moved quickly, restlessly, like one long harassed, and the stir brought a fact keenly to my mind. I was acting the listener in the house of my friend, and though I had no evil purpose in so doing, I was open to censure. Reluctant as I was, I stepped back and tiptoed out of the old wing.

A question had been solved. Borrowdale was not so much in the dark as to the unknown men, and he surely knew who that scoffing person was who, calling himself the "son of the sea," and writing the threat, had announced that he would "come again." The torn letter behind the loose board was no traitor to facts, and I had touched the heart of the mystery when I used my hammer so well.

But Borrowdale—I meditated and gestured impatiently. He had kept something back, but I knew the man and was still loyal to him. If he did not tell all his business, he certainly was the soul of honor. That would be my position until I was otherwise convinced.

Thinking this I felt my face redden as I recalled that I had listened so long. But never mind! It had been with no ignoble motive, and I was ready to risk life for my friend.

I resumed my duties, but with a thirst for daylight that was new. Devoted as I still was to my host, the mysteries of Hereside were becoming harassing. I was not in the confidence of anybody, yet two factions were at war, ready to proceed to an extreme, and I was a nonentity in the game. Although ready to fight for Borrowdale to the last, I felt the twang of my nerves, and every foot of the house seemed to reek with dark schemes and hidden plots and purposes.

At last a look from a window showed the first barely visible paling of night, and I turned away with a sigh of relief. I had gone only a few yards when the swish of female garments called my attention, and I saw a slight figure slip quietly out of Borrowdale's room. Not noticing me in the gloom, she flitted along the hall until she reached Miami's room, and then disappeared within. Vaguely curious at the first, I shrugged my shoulders at the end.

"It's nothing!" I thought.

Inside of two hours I knew I was wrong.

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A Mean Trick.

A New York business man had just purchased a new stiff hat, and he went into a saloon with half a dozen of his friends to "wet the hat." They all took beer, and passed the hat around so all could see it. One of the meanest men that ever held a country office went to the bartender and had a thin wad of Limburger cheese cut off, and when the party were looking at the frescoed ceiling through the beer glasses, this wicked person slipped the cheese under the sweat band of the hat, and the man put it on and walked out.

The man who owned the hat was one of your nervous people, who are always complaining of being sick, and who feel as though some dreadful disease was going to take possession of them and carry them off. He went back to his place of business, took off his hat, and laid it on the table, and proceeded to answer some letters. He thought he detected a strange odor, and when his partner asked him if he didn't feel sick, he said he believed he did.

The man turned pale, and said he guessed he would go home. He met a man on the sidewalk who said the air was full of miasma, and in the street car, a man who sat next to him moved away to the end of the car, and asked him if he had just come from the hospital. The man with the hat said he had not, when the stranger said smallpox was prevalent in the city, and he guessed he would get out and walk, and he notified the conductor, and jumped off.

A cold perspiration broke out on the forehead of the man with the new hat, and he took it off to wipe his forehead, when the cheese seemed to assert itself, to even roll over and breathe, and the man got the full benefit of it, and he came near fainting away.

He got home, and his wife met him and asked him what was the matter. He said he believed mortification had set in, and she inhaled one whiff as he took off his hat, and said she thought it had.

"Where did you get into it?" said she.

"Get into it?" said the man. "I have not got into anything, but some deadly disease has got hold of me, and I am a doomed man!"

She told him if any disease that smelled like that had got hold of him and was going to be chronic, she felt as though he would be a burden to himself if he lived very long. She got his clothes off, soaked his feet in mustard water, and he slept.

The man slept, and dreamed that a smallpox flag was hung in front of his house, and that he was riding in an ambulance to the pest house. The wife sent for a doctor, and then, when the man of pills arrived, she told him all about the case. The doctor picked up the patient's new hat, tried it on, and gave a sniff. He said the hat was picked before it was ripe. The doctor and the wife made a post-mortem examination of the hat, and found the hat was smeared with Limburger.

"Few and short were the prayers they said." The doctor brought to the bedside the hat, opened up the sweat leather, and showed the dying man what it was that smelled so, and told him he was as well as any man in the city. The last we saw of the odoriferous citizen, he was trying to bribe the bartender to tell him which one of those pelicans it was that smeared his hat lining with Limburger.

* * *

No One to Drive Them.

A country minister, when out walking one afternoon, was surprised, upon coming to a turn in the road, to hear the voice of some one approaching him swearing violently. As he rounded the bend he was horrified to meet a small barefoot lad driving a yoke of oxen and alternately lashing them with his whip and strings of profanity. The minister accosted the lad and began to lecture him upon the outcome of such vices. The substance of the lecture was to quit swearing and join the church. Finally the dominie paused and the boy broke in, saying:

Goldarn it, parson, yer only wastin' your time, fer you see it's like this: Mom's religious, and ever sence Sis' ben a-goin' with the school-teacher she's got religion, too. Then pap he got it a spell ago at one of your revival meetin's. Now ef I go an' git it, who in blazes is a-gonna drive these here oxen?"

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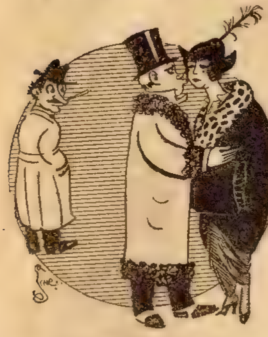
THE PEROXIDE BLONDE

By AUGUSTIN W. BREEDEN



He saw him kiss her.

HARVEY PECK had married himself a wife. He had heard from a friend that two could live as cheap as one, and had decided to try it. The girl he married was a thoroughbred, high-stepping young woman, with the manners of a queen and with a queenly disregard for the small things of life, such as expenses, for example. So Harvey installed her in a rented cottage at the edge of the city where he lived, and began to try to build a home around her. He soon found that it took slightly more for two to live than for one; in fact, he soon learned that it took a very great deal more for two to live than for one. He began to work harder, to stay longer at the office, to lie awake at night and plan his work, and to do all those other things that an honest business man does when he needs more money.

Then after a year or so appeared a third party on the scene, and then a fourth, and then a fifth; and the expenses of the establishment mounted up in a sort of geometrical progression, doubling with each new accession of territory, so to speak. Mrs. Peck stayed at home a good deal. It was, as you might say, necessary for her to be there to receive the newcomers. She was seldom seen on the streets, and never seen on the streets with Peck. One reason for this was that Peck got the habit of walking so fast when he was going about his business that no woman on earth could have kept up with him, and his wife, who was naturally short-legged, would have been completely outdistanced in the race. Another thing was that he was so busy and so engrossed with business cares that he would scarcely have recognized his little wife had he met her on the streets.

Then came a day when fortune changed for the Pecks. Peck bought some shares in an oil company, and, contrary to all expectations, the property developed a bunch of gushers, and the stock soared out of sight. At about the same time the newcomers ceased to come, and Mrs. Peck did not have to remain home to be, as it were, on the reception committee. But with good fortune came domestic troubles, which seems to be the rule here in America Peck and his little wife, who had stuck faithfully to each other during their days of comparative poverty, began to be estranged as soon as good fortune chased the wolves out of the back yard

It came about in this way. Peck was seen one evening in a cafe eating tomato bouillon with a good-looking lady and talking to her in a most confidential and familiar manner. Now men seldom gossip; that is a well known fact. But two evenings later Paul Hamilton happened into Mr. Osbourne's real estate office

"Mr. Osbourne," said he, "have you noticed anything strange about old Peck since he struck it rich?"

"Nope," replied Osbourne. "Have a cigar? Why do you ask, Paul? Have you noticed anything queer about him?"

"Nothing, as you might say, queer," replied Hamilton, "but I sort of believe that old Peck is getting a little bit gay in his old age. You know, I saw him the other evening with one of the swellest little women I ever set eyes on, and he was sitting up close to her, too."

"Well, I do know," said Osbourne "Well, it's not many of us, Paul, that can stand prosperity. That's just the way. Give a man a little too much money, and he'll get into devilment sure."

That night Osbourne mentioned the matter to Mrs. Osbourne, and the next day she mentioned it to Mrs. Smith, a friend of hers who lived near the Pecks. There might have been nothing to all this; but a day or two later Osbourne himself saw Peck with a beautifully dressed lady, and actually saw him kiss her as he handed her into a carriage.

"Have you heard anything more about Peck's carryings-on?" asked Mrs. Osbourne that night

"Well, no," replied her husband. "But I saw him with a mighty swell lady this evening. Don't know whether it was the same one Paul saw him with the other day or not; but she sure was some looker, and he kissed her good-by as he handed her into a carriage."

"What for looking woman was she?" asked Mrs. Osbourne.

"Oh, I don't hardly know," said Osbourne, man like. "She had on furs, I remember that. I rather think she was a blonde—blue eyes, I think, and a sort of babyish complexion."

"Short or tall?"

"Wait, now let me see. She was tall. I remember that she had to stoop when she got into the carriage."

"A tall blonde with blue eyes and a babyish complexion and wearing a rich set of furs. I'll bet she's a bad'un. Mr. Osbourne, I'm glad you've never been a man to gamble on big chances. I'd rather you'd be moderately successful than to strike it rich, and forget your self-respect, as so many men do when they get a little money."

Mr. Osbourne ah-hahed and ah-hemmed virtuously, and the conversation was dropped.

The next day Mrs. Osbourne again told her friend Mrs. Smith

"I tell you what I'm going to do." said the virtuous Mrs. Smith. "I'm going right straight to poor dear Mrs. Peck and tell her all about her husband's carryings-on. The poor thing has stayed right there at home year after year and taken care of her babies, and now her husband is neglecting her and running round with tall, blue-eyed blondes. Chances are she's a peroxide blonde; they're worse than the natural ones. I'm going to tell that poor little woman this very day!"

Mrs. Smith did tell Mrs. Peck, adding certain embellishments to make her tale sound more convincing; and trouble began to brew at once. When Peck came home that evening he found his wife in a tremendous pout. It was in vain that he presented her with a beautiful and costly cameo; in vain he offered to take her to the play that night and have supper at the swellest cafe in town afterwards. She pouted and pouted and pouted. And so poor Peck, being a domestic sort of a man now that he had time to be anything but a human machine, went to the nursery and played with the kiddies till bedtime.

Twice during the next few days certain business men, who knew Peck well, saw him going about with a strange woman, always treating her with the utmost gallantry, but showing a sort of intimacy through his gallantry that spoke ill for the lady. Once Paul Hamilton said to Peck:

"That was a swell rig your lady love had on last night at the cafe."

And Peck answered: "I ought to know how swell it is; it cost me nearly two thousand dollars."

The next day Paul Hamilton told Mr. Osbourne that Peck said he had spent two thousand dollars on his new affinity. The next day after that Mrs. Osbourne went over to Mrs. Smith's, and said Mrs Osbourne:

"Do you know, dear Mrs. Smith, that brute Harvey Peck openly boasts in the streets that he is spending thousands of dollars on that tall peroxide blonde of his. He told a certain party two evenings ago that he had given her a set of furs that cost over two thousand dollars, and a collar of pearls that must have cost three times that money."

That "collar of pearls" was a happy invention of Mrs. Osbourne; it came to her in a flash while she was talking, like an inspiration to a poet.

When Mrs. Smith went to Mrs. Peck with the story, she told it something like the following

Mrs. Peck, do you know your husband is making a perfect fool of himself running about the streets with a tall peroxide blonde in a four-thousand dollar set of furs and a ten-thousand dollar collar of pearls, which he himself boasts to have given her. He boasts that he has been supplying her with clothes for years; and that, no doubt, is the reason why he had so little to give to you and the children before he struck oil."

"That is enough!" cried little Mrs. Peck, tossing her coal-black head of hair, while her black eyes snapped "It's the same big blonde you told me of before, isn't it?"

Mrs. Smith nodded impressively.

"Very well, I shall sue Harvey Peck for divorce and alimony and the possession of the children. Can you give me the names of witnesses who will come into court and swear to these things?"

"I can," replied Mrs. Smith. "Summon Paul Hamilton and Mr. Osbourne, the real estate man. They know all about the affair from beginning to end."

That afternoon Mrs. Peck took the children and left for her mother's in the next town, leaving a note for her husband warning him of her impending divorce proceedings, and giving her grounds of complaint. Three days later she came into court and preferred charges against her husband. She was heavily veiled, and never spoke except in a whisper to her attorney.

Mr. Osbourne was put on the stand. He looked bothered and disgusted, and spoke very reluctantly when he spoke at all. But there just outside the bar sat his wife, as if there to prompt him and see that he told the whole truth. He stated that he had seen Harvey Peck kiss a lady as he helped her into a carriage. The lady was a tall blonde, according to his best recollection, but he could not be sure.

"Was she wearing a collar of pearls and a set of furs?"

He was not sure on either of these points, but he thought she had on a set of furs.

"What was Peck's attitude toward her?"

He acted like a man that was very much in love with her. That was enough.

Paul Hamilton was next put on the stand.

"What, if anything, did the defendant here ever tell you about buying furs for a certain unknown lady whom he was with a few evenings before?" asked Mrs. Peck's attorney.

"He didn't tell me anything about buying furs," replied Paul. "About a week ago I saw him in a cafe about midnight with a swell little lady in a costly satin gown and a mighty swell opera coat. And the next day I spoke about how finely she was dressed; and he said he himself bought her the outfit, and that it cost him nearly two thousand dollars."

"Did she have on a collar of pearls?"

"I don't remember."

"Did you ever see him with this same lady at any other time?"

"Yes. I saw him with her in that same cafe once before."

"What was his attitude toward her?"

"He acted like he was in love with her."

"That will do."

Harvey Peck was next put upon the stand. The plaintiff had made out a pretty good case in the eyes of the Judge, but he wanted to see if the de-

Speaking Of Lunch

the wife said, "Bring home a package of

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fendant could offer any palliating circumstances.

"Mr. Peck," said the Judge, looking over his glasses at the defendant, "do you admit buying this satin gown—dress—and this opera coat for the party you were seen in the cafe with at that late hour?"

"I do, your honor."

"Do you admit kissing her as you helped her into a carriage on a certain other occasion?"

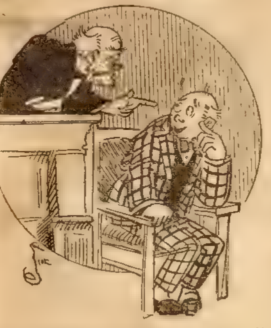
"I do, your honor."

"Both of these gentlemen testify that you seem to be greatly infatuated with the party in question. Is that a fact?"

"Yes, your honor, I am very much in love with her."

"I want to say to you, sir," roared the righteous Judge, "that you are a beast! I shall grant your wife a divorce, with half your income as alimony, and with the possession of all the children. Have you anything to say why this decree should not be granted against you?"

"I can only say," replied Peck, "that if my present union is broken up, I shall marry the woman I gave the opera coat to as soon as possible. She is now trying to get a divorce from her husband; and if she gets it, it will leave her free to marry me, provided I can win her love. I have loved her and done things for her for years and years, but she has not returned my love as she should."



"I'll grant your wife a divorce."

"I want to say," roared the Judge, "that you and this woman are both a pair of undesirables. I shall grant your wife ninety per cent of your income as alimony. I shall make you so poor that you cannot marry this other creature. Where is she, anyway?"

All this had become too much for poor Mrs. Peck to bear. She had risen to her feet as if she intended to leave the courtroom.

"She is here in the courtroom, waiting the result of this trial," replied Peck.

"Where?" asked the Judge. "Bring her forward; I want to say a word to her"

"Will the little lady in the heavy black veil, standing by her attorney there, step forward and raise her veil, please?" Peck spoke with a certain degree of emotion in his voice.

"Why, that's your wife, you fool, you!" cried the Judge, as Mrs. Peck obeyed her husband's request.

"Will Mr. Paul Hamilton kindly look at this lady and see if she is not the one he saw in the cafe on those two occasions?" said Peck, sweetly, as his wife lifted her veil.

"It is, by gosh!" cried Hamilton.

"You great big idiot, you!" snorted Mrs. Osbourne, reaching over and catching her better half by the ear. "Is this the tall peroxide blonde that you saw him kiss?"

"I'm afraid it is," whimpered poor Mr. Osbourne, meekly. "I never was no hand for noticing women folks closely."

"But this is your wife!" cried the Judge. "This can't be the woman you are in love with! Where is the other woman?"

"I beg your pardon, your honor. Is not a man allowed to be in love with his wife?"

"But how about the four-thousand-dollar set of furs and the collar of pearls?" queried the wife, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

"I think they go with the peroxide blonde," replied the husband. "They were probably bred in the active imagination of some of your women friends."

"It all came about through people knowing you and not knowing your wife!" cried Mrs. Peck's attorney. "It should be a lesson to you, Mr. Peck, to take your wife out more."

"That's true," admitted Peck. Then he turned to the crowd in the courtroom. "Ladies and gentlemen," he cried, "I want to introduce you to my wife, the woman I am in love with; and I wish to call your attention to the fact that she is not a peroxide blonde!"

* * *

Get a Move On!

"Hurry up with breakfast, can't you? I've been sitting here two minutes without a thing to eat."

"Hello, Bill! Going my way? Hurry up, or we'll miss the train."

"Boy, take this letter over to Jones & Montgomery's office and hurry back. Hurry up, now!"

"Hello! Yes. This you, Maria? Yes. Yes. Well, talk quick. I'm in a hurry to get up town to keep an appointment."

"Waiter, bring me a glass of milk and piece of apple pie. And hurry up! I'm in a hurry."

"Miss Typer, hurry up with those letters, will you? I want to sign them before I leave."

"What's the matter with that darn elevator? Hurry up, can't you?"

"Can't stop tonight, Bill. Got to hurry up home. Going to the theater."

"Can't you get Mary to hurry up dinner, Maria? We'll be late, sure as you live."

"Hurry and fix this tie for me, will you, Maria? I never can make the darn thing look decent."

"Hurry up! Do you know what time it is? We'll miss half of the first act if you don't get a move on you."

"Hurry up and get on your things. We'll get out ahead of the crowd."

"Where am I going in such a hurry? Why, to get a bite to eat, of course. Hurry, or we won't get a table."

"Hurry up! There comes our car! Hey!"

"Hurry and get that light out and come to bed. I've got to get off in a hurry tomorrow morning."

* * *

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"'That is old Gobsa Golde's daughter the Countess. I knew her father when he went about with his trousers held up by one suspender.'

"I regarded the beautiful young woman through my glass. Her dress was audacious. I said dryly:

"'She must take after her father, then. Her gown, I see, is held up by one strap.'"

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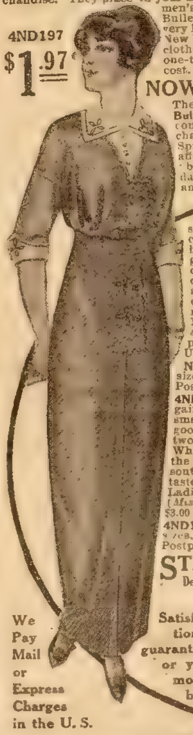

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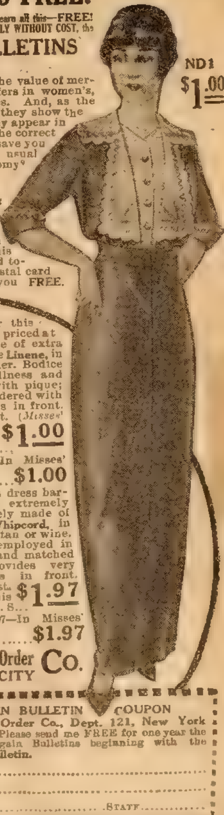

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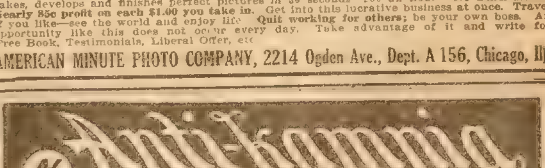

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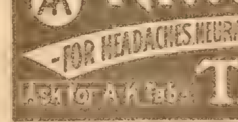

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The Palace of Doom

Or, The Passion of an Empress

By Hugh Hamilton

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CHAPTER XVII.

A WONDERFUL WOMAN

IT IS time, perhaps, that we return to the fugitives whom we left in the bleak Siberian hut, besieged by the ravenous pack which had almost accomplished its purpose. But for the daring of Ursus, who had cleared a way to the door, there would be no need for us to traverse the white space between St. Petersburg and exile-land to look after the fortunes of the occupants of the sledge. The giant Cossack had planted himself against the heavy portal and thus barred out the four-footed enemies.

They were yet a long distance from the goal of the race. Xenia sank exhausted from Ivan's arms, but in her eyes was a look of gratitude. The gray pack leaped against the door, but their efforts only drew a smile from Ursus, to whose ears their cries of bitter disappointment was now the sweetest music.

The old shack was not inhabited, but Ivan managed to make a fire on the long-abandoned hearth, and the Countess sank into a refreshing slumber on a pallet of straw. When she awoke there was the old-time brightness in her eyes which [illegible] exile had not dimmed. She had dreamed of Paul, and her first word was his name.

"It will be Paul erelong," reassured Ivan Panine. "We are on the right road to freedom, and the Empress——"

Xenia's cheeks went white at this reference to Catherine. After all, they were still in the Empress's dominions. Her arm was strong and far-reaching: There seemed no boundary to her vengeance. She had but to nod and her slightest look became merciless to her menials.

When daylight came the famished pack, cheated of its prey, sneaked back to [illegible] dreary lairs among the hills. The light increased and revealed the well-picked bones of the noble horses that had carried them to safety only to lose their lives in the end.

Astrakhan beckoned them over the freezing versts, and at last, hungry and chilled, they set out on foot. It is not for us to recount the long journey, but suffice it to say that one night three figures glided into the city and sought a certain house where they were welcomed by a little man who recoiled when he gazed into their faces.

In all Russia Catherine the Great had no more bitter foe than Alexius Maroff. By an enormous expenditure of money he had bribed certain officials who winked at his residence in Astrakhan, and, following the occupation of jeweler, he had grown richer day by day, until his wealth was wonderful.

"You are safe here," said he to Xenia, who warmed herself at his cheery fire. "I am never visited by the police, for the power of money is great, and every man in Russia has his price."

"That is true, Alexius Maroff," answered Xenia, with a faint smile, and then she added under her breath "All but Paul."

The fugitives knew that their escape must sooner or later reach Catherine's ears. And they could imagine the fury that would take possession of her heart. Astrakhan would soon be no hiding-place at all, and when Xenia thought of this she wondered why she had not remained at Ural.

Alexius Maroff came and went. As the long days waned the occupants of his house took heart, but the dream of safety was suddenly dissipated.

One night Maroff returned from his shop with a face seamed with excitement. The Countess Xenia read disaster in his looks.

"What troubles you, my dear Alexius?" she asked, trembling for the words he was trying to keep back.

The jeweler drew her to one side and glanced hastily at Ivan and Ursus who sat in the blaze of the fire.

"The foe has come," he said, dropping his voice to a whisper.

"Have it out!" cried Xenia. "I know from your manner that we are in the shadow."

"Russan is here."

"What Russan, the Wolf, whom Magda threw over the bridge above the Neva?"

"Even so, Countess."

"And you have seen him?"

"My eyes have seen the Empress's secret spy."

She did not recoil. Perhaps her face went a little whiter and her heart fluttered wilder in her bosom.

"Here!" she exclaimed, emptying her jewels from the little casket which had accompanied her into exile. "You say every man in Russia has his price. These for Russan, the Wolf, good Alexius."

Maroff smiled.

"All the jewels in Russia cannot buy this slave of Catherine," he replied, with a shake of the head. "He has scented his prey——"

Xenia compressed her lips to keep back the cry that struggled for expression.

"Then send Russan, the Wolf, to me," she cried.

"What, to you, Countess?"

"To me!" Xenia stamped her foot. "Send Russan to me, Alexius."

The jeweler looked at her astounded.

"If you do not, I shall seek him," she went on. "I must see this man."

Awed into silence by her eyes, Maroff withdrew, and half an hour later Russan crossed the threshold of his house.

The fugitive Countess was alone.

"So you have found me, Russan?" she said, meeting his gaze with the stuff heroines are made of. "You were not drowned in the Neva."

Catherine's spy shuddered at thought of his experience.

"Stand over there!" continued Xenia, pointing to a certain spot in the room. "Who sent you to Astrakhan?"

"The Great Empress."

"For what?"

"That is a question you can answer best, Countess."

"She has heard of my escape from the mines?"

"She knows all."

"And you have come to take me back?"

Russan, the Wolf, nodded his head. He was a wiry man, with but little flesh on his bones, but his arms were powerful, as Magda had told her.

Xenia crossed the room and coolly locked the door. Then whirling upon the man, she threw out one arm.

"Whither were you to escort me, Russan, to St. Petersburg or to Ural?"

"To Ural, Countess."

"Good! You shall drive me to St. Petersburg."

The words thrilled the Empress's spy.

"Get out your sledge, Russan," she continued. "I will give you no trouble."

"But, Countess——"

"Silence!" interrupted Xenia. "To St. Petersburg!"

"I cannot disobey the Great Empress."

"You shall!" and the beautiful woman towered before him like an avenging angel. "The sledge, Russan!"

"But, my dear——"

"I have commanded silence," and reaching to a table, Xenia caught up a pistol which she coolly cocked. "Come! Where is your sledge? You have furs and they are warm. We will go alone."

"But it is far, Countess?"

"Were St. Petersburg at the other side of the world, you shall drive me thither!"

His gaze sank before her deep dark eyes. Never before had he dealt with such a woman.

Huddled among the furs of Russan's sledge but watching him like a falcon, with the pistol in her white hand, sat the most beautiful woman in the whole empire. It was a long journey. Would it never end? Was it to be a lone white way all the time? The huge horses seemed never to tire. Guided by the silent Russan they kept their way over the snowy roads, and Xenia, steeled to a purpose, did not sleep.

"The lights of St. Petersburg, Countess," said the Wolf, at last, with a shrug of his shoulders. "We shall soon cross the Neva."

"Where you took your winter bath," smiled the solitary passenger.

The sledge dashed into the sleeping capital brilliant with thousands of lights in the stately palaces, and skimmed over the well-snowed streets.

"Whither now?" asked Russan.

"To my palace."

"But you do not know, Countess, that it belongs to the Princess Dragonoff?"

"To that——" Xenia beat back the word that rose upon her lips.

"The Princess is mistress there," continued Russan.

"To my palace!" commanded Xenia, and the sledge turned suddenly into another avenue.

"I shall get Siberia for this," growled Russan, when the vehicle stopped in front of the exile's home.

There was no reply. The Countess threw aside her wrappings and sprang from the sledge.

"Good night, Russan," she cried in cheery tones, as she ran up the steps.

In another moment she stood in the broad hall of her illustrious ancestors. A woman who suddenly made her appearance recoiled with a cry and stared into her face as though she had come back from the long dead.

"Go!" thundered Xenia, covering the Dragonoff with an outstretched hand. "This is my abode. Go tell the Great Empress that Xenia Carloff is home once more!" and the haughty Princess shrank from her with a gasp and clinched her jeweled hands in insensate fury.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOVE.

"WHAT! back in the lion's lair?" cried Paul Daroski when news of Xenia's return drifted in to him. "She was not to come to St. Petersburg, but Astrakhan was to hold her till the skies grew brighter." He walked the floor of his room with impatient strides.

What would Catherine say? Aye, what would she do? The news seemed incredible, but it was not to be doubted. The Countess Carloff was really back and in her own home, from which she had turned the Princess Dragonoff, to

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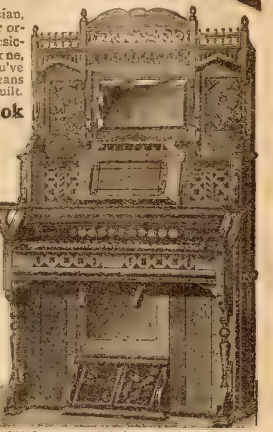

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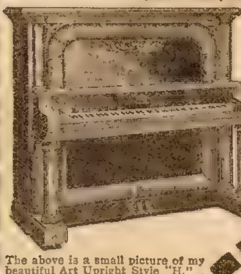

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whom the palace had been given by the great Empress.

He must see Xenia, come what might. Now, if ever, she needed a friend and a strong arm, but when Paul took note of everything he felt that Xenia had brought her courage with her, and he knew what that was. She was a Carloff, and it took a Carloff to dare the will and vengeance of the great woman who sat upon the throne of Russia.

It was the night after the home-coming that Paul presented himself to the woman he loved. She received him in the old parlor, her whole face aglow and her eyes bright with hope, despite the long exile.

"I could not remain from your side, Paul!" she exclaimed, as he clasped her in his strong arms and looked into her beautiful face. "I dare the wrath of Catherine. I know her power. She knows that even now I am housed in the palace, for I told the Dragonoff to tell her."

"Who brought you back, dear?" anxiously inquired Paul.

"Who but Russan, the Wolf?" smiled Xenia. "I forced the Wolf to bring me home. There was a pistol at his back all the way from Astrakhan," and she laughed till her eyes twinkled.

"You have done things, Paul," she went on, gazing enraptured at him. "You have fought Colonel Poniatowski and wiped out that old insult. You have killed Prince Topotkin. One by one the old enemies are disappearing."

"But the greatest of all remain," answered Paul. "We still have Orloff and the great Empress."

"And you cannot fight the Count."

"Simply because he deems it beneath his dignity to insult me," returned the young Colonel with curling lip.

"Would Count Orloff fight me?"

Paul drew back and stared at her.

"What? Fight you, my love?" he cried.

"Why not?" smiled Xenia. "You forget that I know what a sword is."

"Yes, I taught you the use of the blade."

"And I proved an apt pupil, as you must confess. When I came home I found the Dragonoff in the old nest, but she did not tarry. If looks could kill, Paul, we would not be here tonight. Ere this she has been closeted with the Empress——"

"And you will feel the talons of the [illegible]-falcon of Russia!"

Xenia arose and stood before him, her splendid figure drawn to its true height and in her eyes arrows of defiance.

"Paul," she cried, "I weighed everything before I came back. The smallest particles of hope and fear I laid in the balance, and watched the scales of fate. There lives no being who can keep me from you. Not the might of Catherine nor her basest passions, and God knows she has much to answer for at the bar of Heaven, can tear from my heart the love you have given me."

It was worth everything to be loved by such a woman. Paul realized this as she confronted him, lovelier than ever and glowing with that gentleness which had captivated him at the first hour of their meeting.

"You have the Order of the Iron Cross," pursued the Countess, scarcely pausing.

"Yes, and it burns me," exclaimed Paul.

"You are the Colonel of the Guards."

"It was for your sake that I accepted these things," he said. "I have been playing for time. I have been under the smiles of the Empress ever since Siberia swallowed you up. Catherine at any moment will dismiss Orloff for Paul Daroski."

"A bear for a lordly eagle!" cried Xenia. "You know what the exchange means for you, Paul?"

He seemed to shudder within himself.

"Yes, I know. This woman wants a new lover. She has looked upon me with eyes of passion. She would make me her favorite, give me a residence in the Winter Palace, and keep me there till some other crossed her path, and then cast me aside, loaded with wealth and decorations, to have conscience brand me an Empress's paramour through life. No, my love, such honor, if honor it be, has no charms for me. Better a hut in the heart of Siberia with you than the gilded favorite of the greatest ruler in all this world."

"Now it is Paul Daroski speaking!" exclaimed Xenia. "I haven't doubted you a single moment. You have been in my dreams amid the Northern snows, and the wild winds of the haunted steppes have been the sweetest love songs a woman ever heard. When Ivan Panine told me that Ursus had come, I saw your hand in it, Paul. And when I looked into the face of the big Cossack I knew that deliverance was near."

"I felt that Ursus would not fail me. He swore upon the ikon of his fathers, and I knew he could be trusted."

"And he proved himself a man!" cried Xenia, exultingly. "He seemed a god when he fought his way through the wolves to the door of the hut, and I kissed him, Paul, thinking all the time of you."

A brief silence fell between the pair.

"I've got the old servants back," continued the Countess. "I have Magda with me, and Feodor. I am entrenched in the Palace of Doom and Catherine, great and powerful as she is, shall not dispossess me."

These were brave words, and Paul gazed admiringly at the woman who stood before him. If he could have witnessed a scene even then taking place within the Winter Palace he might have shuddered.

Alone in her most gorgeous chamber reclined the great Empress, her cheeks the hue of ashes and her lips twitching nervously. She was clad in royal robes, and a tiara of jewels adorned her head. Her flowing garments hid her feet, and her hands were clenched at her sides till the pink nails bled the delicate palms and the crimson trickled over the filmy silks.

She was waiting for a certain person, as her gaze directed toward the door would have told the most casual observer, and when a heavy footstep greeted her, she leaned forward in silent expectation.

The portal swung gently inward, and Russan, the Wolf, stood before his ruler. Catherine studied him from head to foot for a moment, and then, with a gesture, beckoned him forward. He approached timidly, with half-averted face, as if he dared not encounter the baleful flashing of the imperial eyes.

"Stand erect!" commanded the Empress, in tones calculated to chill the boldest heart.

Russan drew his little figure up, and a contemptuous look greeted him.

"So you brought the Countess back?" almost hissed the Empress.

"Your majesty——"

"No apologies!" interrupted Catherine. "It is a long way from Astrakhan to St. Petersburg."

"Many versts, your imperial highness," stammered the Wolf.

"And you were alone with her in the sledge?"

"I was."

"A man and a woman, and the man the slave of your Empress!"

"But, your majesty——"

Catherine checked him with an uplifted hand.

"You were to convey her to Ural."

"Such were my orders, but——"

"But you brought her to me, threw her into my teeth, cast this woman back upon the chessboard of fate, and then sneaked off to hide your duplicity where you thought my hand could not find you."

The wolf felt his blood run cold before the rage of this great woman. Catherine leaned forward, and for some moments transfixed him with a look such as he had never seen before.

"What are your hands for?" she went on. "Men call you Russan, the Wolf and yet you let a lamb outwit you."

What could he say?

"Did you know that I wanted not this creature here?"

"I knew, your majesty, but she was armed."

"Armed?"

"Yes. There was a pistol at my back all the way."

A smile dawned upon the hardened face before him.

"And you feared the pistol?" laughed Catherine. "You feared the little pellet of lead?"

"I—I ——"

"Man, wretch though you are, I would have ennobled you if you had not brought her back to me."

"I prefer to die simply Russan."

In the stillness that followed, Catherine rose to her feet and crossed the room. Coming back to him she seemed for an instant on the fringe of springing upon him, but, collecting herself, she drew off and tottered into a chair, her hands clutching at her heart in a spasm of sudden pain.

"Go!" she exclaimed, darting a fierce look at the trembling spy. "I forgive. Even a dog values life. A pistol at one's back is a potent argument. Leave me, traitor!"

Russan was glad to get beyond the precincts of that room. His knees smote together as he staggered toward the door, and from the depths of his soul he thanked his God that he lived.

Catherine tottered to her feet and snatched a phial from a golden case. Lifting it to her lips, she emptied it of its contents, and reeling toward the chair, sank therein with a moan of pain. The door opened. A beautiful woman sprang into the room and halted with a look of horror.

"The Empress is dead!" she exclaimed, and then fled like a deer.

CHAPTER XIX.

A WOMAN INTERVENES.

BUT Catherine was not dead. The tocsin of doom had not yet sounded for the great Empress. She was still able to crush. Her iron hand should abate none of its strength, and her vengeance lose naught of its ferocity. The woman who had come between her and her passion for the handsome Colonel of the Guards should have a brief respite of love, and then know that she (Catherine) was masterful.

Gregory Orloff wanted nothing better than to get Paul out of the way, yet he dared not broach his desires to his royal

(Continued on page eighteen.)

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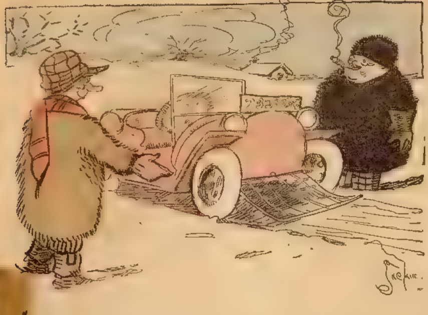


T. Ravelin Foote—"That's a great fender you have in front of your car. I didn't know you were so careful of the safety of the stray animals on the road."

G Howley Speedup—"Just think of the chickens and sucking pigs it brings home when meat is so high."

Wanted to Know.

A little slum child was enjoying his first glimpse of pastoral life.

The setting sun was gilding the grass and roses of the old-fashioned garden, and on a little stool he sat beside the farmer's wife who was plucking a chicken

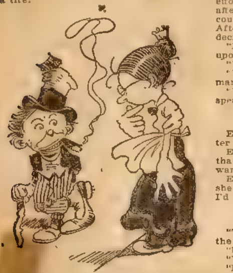
He watched the operation gravely for some time. Then spoke:

"Do yer take off their clothes every night, lady?"

A Narrow Escape.

"Here is a story about a Pittsburgh man who was shot at by an angry woman, who only succeeded in hitting his chauffeur in the leg"

Gee! he must have been glad it wasn't a tire!"



"Ah, lady, I have brains to burn There is nothing I like better than to tackle knotty problems."

"Indeed! Well, go down to the wood pile. You will find that last load the most knotty problem you ever tackled during your career

A Duplicate Order.

Senator O'Gorman tells the following story: "A wealthy Westerner met a friend of former days who was evidently on the downward path. Plainly, liquor had been the cause of his undoing

"The Westerner, however, wished to be friendly, and asked the man to have a drink. The friend gladly accepted the invitation

"Leading the way into a cafe, the Westerner said to the bartender 'Two straight whiskys, please.'

"The derelict moved quickly to the bar, and said, in an eager and decisive tone of voice: 'Give me the same.'"

Further Information Needed.

A negro had made several ineffectual efforts to propose to the object of his affections, but on each occasion his courage failed him at the last moment. After thinking the matter over, he finally decided to telephone, which he did

"Is that you, Samantha?" he inquired, upon being given the proper number

"Yes, it's me," returned the lady

"Will you marry me, Samantha, and marry me quick?"

"Yes I will," was the reply "Who's speaking?"

A Little Financier.

Effie's Brother—"Do you love my sister Effie?"

Effie's Steady Company "Why, Willie, that is a queer question Why do you want to know?"

Effie's Brother—"She said last night she would give a dollar to know, and I'd like to scoop it in."—Puck

Going to Be Fired.

"That fellow acts as though he were the big gun of this establishment."

"He has one cause to think so."

"What is that?"

"He is going to be fired."

First and Last.

Casper—"Among the ancient doctors, bleeding the patient was the first operation in treating a case."

Charlie—"And now it's the last."

There Are Others.

The following is taken from a North Dakota weekly newspaper.

"It is reported that one of the fastidious newly married ladies of this town kneads bread with her gloves on This incident may be peculiar, but there are others.

"The editor of this paper needs bread with his shoes on; he needs bread with his shirt on: he needs bread with his pants on; and unless some of the delinquent subscribers to this 'Old Rag of Freedom' pony up before long, he will need bread without a d—— thing on, and North Dakota is no Garden of Eden in the winter time."

The Real Sufferer.

During the sermon at a certain church, a baby began to cry, and its mother immediately picked it up and began to carry it toward the door

"Stop!" the minister exclaimed. "Don't go away The baby is not disturbing me."

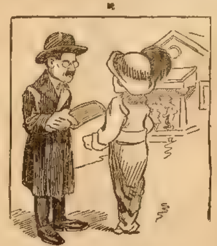
The mother continued her way to the door, with the very audible remark:

"Oh, he isn't, eh? But you're a-disturbin' of him."

A Serious Misunderstanding.

Miss Elderleigh—"So you remarked to Katherine that I looked as old as the hills? Now, don't deny it; I heard you."

Jack Spott—"Oh—er—but you misunderstand. I was merely comparing your age with that of the Hill young ladies I am acquainted with—twins, you know."



The Census Taker—"How many are there in that bunch of Portuguese?"

The Landlady—"Six. A Portugoose, a Portugander and four little Portugoslings."

For the Movies.

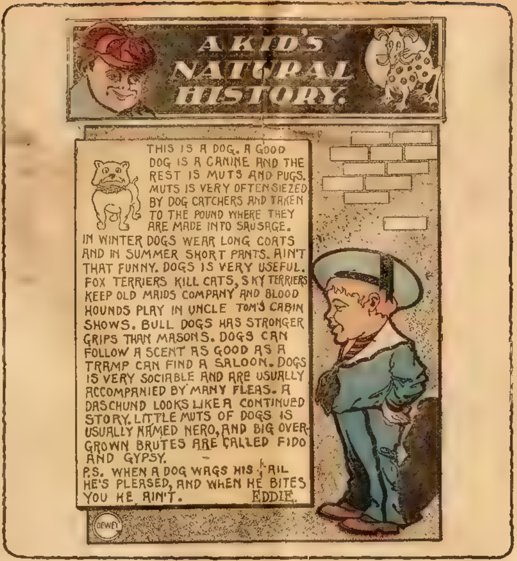
"Have you heard about the awful thing Mr Jobson did this morning? Several of the neighbors saw him dragging his wife around in the back yard by her hair. Don't you think the authorities ought to do something about it?"

"Why should the authorities interfere? Haven't you heard that Jobson and his wife are working for a moving picture film concern?"

She'd Been Married Before.

Friend—"Oh, Mrs. Highup, people are saying the awfulest things! They say you are going to marry one of Brussels & Co.'s day laborers."

Mrs Highup (a widow)—"It's true. The firm sent him up here with my new carpet, and he put it down, stretched it, and tacked it without one single frown or bad word"


A KID'S NATURAL HISTORY.
THIS IS A DOG. A GOOD DOG IS A CANINE AND THE REST IS MUTS AND PUGS. MUTS IS VERY OFTEN SIEZED BY DOG CATCHERS AND TAKEN TO THE POUND WHERE THEY ARE MADE INTO SAUSAGE.
IN WINTER DOGS WEAR LONG COATS AND IN SUMMER SHORT PANTS. AIN'T THAT FUNNY. DOGS IS VERY USEFUL. FOX TERRIERS KILL CATS, SKY TERRIERS KEEP OLD MAIDS COMPANY AND BLOOD HOUNDS PLAY IN UNCLE TOM'S CABIN SHOWS. BULL DOGS HAS STRONGER GRIPS THAN MASONS. DOGS CAN FOLLOW A SCENT AS GOOD AS A TRAMP CAN FIND A SALOON. DOGS IS VERY SOCIABLE AND ARE USUALLY ACCOMPANIED BY MANY FLEAS. A DASCHUND LOOKS LIKE A CONTINUED STORY. LITTLE MUTS OF DOGS IS USUALLY NAMED NERO, AND BIG OVERGROWN BRUTES ARE CALLED FIDO AND GYPSY.
P.S. WHEN A DOG WAGS HIS TAIL HE'S PLEASED, AND WHEN HE BITES YOU HE AIN'T. EDDIE.
DEWEY

Deep Prejudice.

First Amateur—"Why don't you join our yacht club?"

Second Amateur—"I'm afraid I might get put on the measuring committee."

"What difference would that make? Measuring is easy."

"Yes but you've got to add a lot of measurements together, and then extract the square root. I'd rather not sail than extract a square root."

He Married Her.

He (after the honeymoon)—"Why did you at one time talk so much about being afraid that some one would marry you for money"

She (a smart woman)—"Because if any one did marry me for money, it would be such a terrible mistake, you know, because I haven't any."

He—"Oh—um—yes, yes, of course."

Keeping Her at Home.

Wife—'Don't you think you might manage to keep house alone for a week, while I go off on a visit?'

Husband—"I guess so! yes, of course."

"But won't you be lonely and miserable?"

"Not a bit."

'Huh! Then I won't go."

The Fraud.

"Woman," said the dejected young man, "is a disappointment and a fraud."

"Indeed!" replied one listener.

"Yes. I saved up all my tobacco money and lived on bananas two weeks to treat Miss Truelove to the opera and a supper. Then I asked her to marry me and she said she was afraid I was too extravagant to make a good husband."

Permission.

"I asked Miss Muss if I could see her home."

"What did she say?"

"'Come up and look it over any time.'"

Could Do Better.

Prison Missionary—"Don't you think that after you regain your liberty you can do better?"

Burglar—"Well, I'll know enough not to have another pal that's so deaf he can't hear a p'liceman till he's right on us."

The missionary decided to study his case before saying anything more, so he moved on to the next cell

Understood Human Nature.

Editor Bazoo Bugle—"Go a little easy on Colonel Gore this week. In fact, I think we'd better try to—er—smooth matters over somewhat."

Assistant—"Has he made any threats?"

Editor "No, hasn't said a word. That's what worries me."

A Hummer.

First Space Writer—"That article of yours, 'Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction,' is a hummer. Bound to attract attention. Where did you get the facts"

Second Space Writer—"Made 'em up."

Not Engaged.

Caller—"Is your mother engaged?"

Grace (aged 6)—"No, ma'am; Auntie May is engaged, but mamma's married"

Wouldn't Miss It.

Rambling through the park one afternoon, a gentleman took a seat on one of the numerous benches, and while in this restful position, he noticed a boy lying close by

"What's the matter, young man?" he kindly asked, addressing the youngster "Why don't you play with the other children?"

"I don't want to play," answered the boy.

But why don't you want to play?" insisted the gentleman.

"I'm just waitin'," was the startling response of the boy. "A feller painted that bench about fifteen minutes ago, and I want to see you get up."

Ill-Timed Laughter.

"Boohoo! Boohoo!" wailed little Johnny.

"Why, what's the matter, dear?" his mother asked, comfortingly.

"Boohoo—er—p-picture fell on papa's toes."

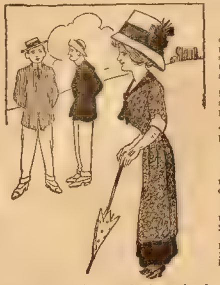
"Well, dear, that's too bad, but you mustn't cry about it, you know."

"I d-d-didn't. I l-laughed. Boohoo! Boohoo!"

Did She Mean It?

A teacher in a certain town had a great deal of trouble to make a boy in her class understand a point in his lesson. Finally, however, she succeeded, and, drawing a long breath remarked:

"If it wasn't for me, you would be the greatest donkey in this town."



Spooner—"She's a peach the apple of my eye. I'm plumb crazy about her."

Mooner—"Better be chary"

He Admired Her Judgment.

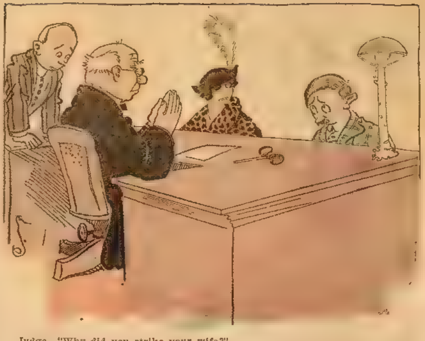
She—"Oh, Fred, dear, you are so noble, so generous, so handsome, so chivalrous, so much the superior of every man I meet, I can't help loving you. Now, what can you see in plain little me to admire?"

He—"Oh, I don't know, dear; but you certainly have very good judgment."

An Accomplished Cow.

According to this advertisement in a Connecticut country paper there is a cow in New England which is possessed of rare accomplishments:

"Wanted—A steady, respectable young man to look after a garden and care for a cow who has a good voice and is accustomed to sing in the choir."



Judge—"Why did you strike your wife?"

Prisoner—"Why, judge, she hit me with a sirloin steak and followed it up with a dish of tripe—her extravagance drives me crazy."

She Might Have Known.

After the bride of a week had inspected all the fresh vegetables in the store, punched a few and inquired all around, she said to the patient clerk: "These tomatoes are just twice as dear as those across the street. Why is it?"

"Ah, yes, ma'am, to be sure; but, you know, as I see you are a judge, these"—and the grocer smiled—"these are hand picked."

"Of course," she said hastily, blushing, "why, I might have known Give me a bushel, please."

A Better Way.

"I have found a good way to catch rabbits," said a "smart" senior in class one day.

"Tell it to me," said the professor.

"Crouch down behind a stone wall and make a noise like a turnip," said the youth with a chuckle.

"A better way than that," came the professor's quick retort, "would be for you to go and sit in a bed of cabbage heads and look natural."

Not the First.

A reporter was interviewing Thomas A. Edison. "And you, sir," he said to the inventor, "made the first talking machine?"

"No," Mr. Edison replied, "the first one was made long before my time—out of a rib."

A Valueless Book.

Kind Lady—"I have a book at home on 'Self-help,' which I think you——"

Beggar—"No use I peddled it for two weeks, an' didn't make a dollar."

Never Tried.

"Bobby, can you keep quiet for just one minute?" cried his father.

"I don't know sir," answered Bobby, "I never tried."

A Wife's Blunder.

Wife (to husband, struggling to fasten the luggage)—"Oh, Harold, I forgot to tell you, the key is at the bottom of the trunk"

A Heroic Young Man.

In a great deal of trepidation, a diffident young man called at the office of the father of the girl he was smitten with, and stammered:

"Sir, I—I—pardon me, but I want to marry your daughter."

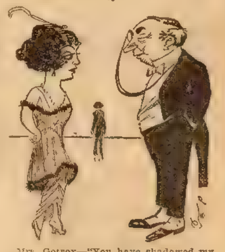
"I'm busy; go and see her mother, young man," said the father.

"I have already seen her mother, and I still wish to marry your daughter."

Exchange of Duties

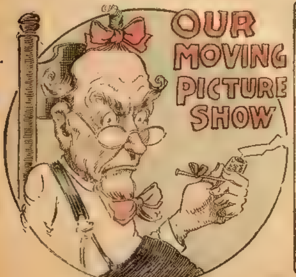
"You think that women ought to be allowed to do men's work"

"Yes," replied Miss Cayenne, "if they want to; although I can't see why a wife should want to put in the afternoon in a shop or an office while the husband is out dancing the tango."

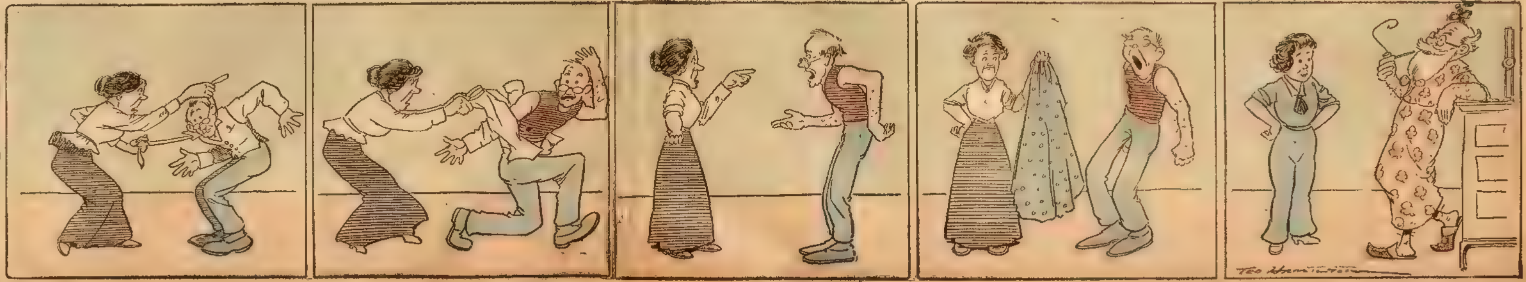


Mrs Gotrox—"You have shadowed my husband for two weeks Did he do anything wrong?"

Society Detective—"Wrong, madam! He ate peas with a spoon, pie with a knife and drank coffee from the saucer. I will spare you further anguish by not mentioning his clothes."



When Women Design Men's Clothes



The Future Woman—"Take off that stiff collar and gay necktie! To wear them is a direct indication of barbarism!

"The idea of wearing shirts, the heavy, uncomfortable things!

Hereafter you must discard the pants; they are ugly! I've got something more soft and graceful for you!

"Here, put this on! And you might resemble a real man if you would grow a beard!

(Some months later)—"Now, you look like something!"

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The Palace of Doom.

(Continued from page fifteen.)

mistress. He had come to learn that regal favors are evanescent things, and though Catherine had loaded him with honors, he felt that his star was setting, and saw in its eclipse the figure of Paul Daroski looming up above the horizon.

Orloff hoped that Xenia would remain unmolested in St. Petersburg, for that would only re-cement Paul's love, and when Catherine saw that her plans had failed, she would turn upon the young Colonel, and with her own hand sweep him from his (Orloff's) path.

The sudden indisposition of the Empress brought about by her rage passed away, and she was again the wilful, mighty ruler whose fame had extended over the entire world.

She now feared that Xenia would leave the Palace of Doom and, hiding somewhere, would escape her vengeance. But the beautiful Countess had no idea of doing this. She would not only remain beneath her ancestral roof, but she would brave the woman on the throne. Accordingly she resolved to give a fete which should tell all St. Petersburg that she had come back.

But who would come to the fete? Who would dare the frowns of the great Empress and dance under her lights, once so much sought by the nobles of the realm? Paul tried to dissuade her.

"I fear you will only sharpen the royal serpent's fangs," said he. "It will be throwing the gantlet into Catherine's face."

"Have I not already thrown it there, dear Paul?" she responded with a smile. "One more cast and then we will rest."

Strange to say, Catherine called Orloff into her presence and commanded him to attend the fete.

"I want you to observe everything," said she. "You are to tell me who attends, who makes love, how she is dressed, and how she looks. Let nothing escape you, my dear Count."

Orloff was startled by her words.

"It mystifies me," said he to a young prince, over the wine table that very night. "I am commanded to attend the Countess of Carloff's fete, and——"

"You are to remember everything?"

"Yes."

"What has come over the Empress? But yesterday this woman was in Siberia. She returns against the Empress's wishes; she drives the Princess Dragonoff from her doors, and now Catherine knuckles to her."

"It is not knuckling, Prince. No living one can read the tablets of Catherine's soul."

"And you will go?"

"I shall be there." Orloff twisted his mustache and looked away.

"Of course Colonel Daroski will be one of the honored guests?"

"The first invited, no doubt." Orloff's face darkened.

"It is rumored that Catherine designs to give him erelong the Jewel of Peter the Great."

"What! that viper?"

Count Orloff, leaning across the table with a start, spilled his wine.

"That decoration he shall never wear! Why, it has been refused me, and——"

"And you have been near the Empress for years."

"And her slave," almost hissed Orloff.

He rose from the table, and for a moment stood erect with rage in his eyes. All at once he seized a heavy salver and held it above his head.

"Thus will I crush this Colonel of the Guards!" he cried, and the next moment the salver crashed to the floor, twisted out of recognition.

"Mind that you don't serve Daroski that way at the Countess's fete," smiled his companion.

"Let him give me the slightest provocation!" roared the irate favorite. "What Catherine cannot break, I can," and he tramped off, leaving the Prince to pay for the wine.

More beautiful than ever, if such a thing could be, Xenia stood in the sumptuous hall of the Palace of Doom receiving her guests. Garbed in white, with the jewels of a long line of ancestors on her bosom, she looked radiant enough to tempt an Oriental king, and those who saw her ceased to wonder that she had excited the jealousy of the great Empress.

Not far away, with a scowl on his libertine features, stood Count Orloff.

"Ye gods!" he muttered under his breath. "If Catherine could see her tonight there would be another journey to Siberia."

"And this time with no return."

Orloff turned and beheld one of the younger princesses of the empire at his side. He flushed.

"Pardon me, Princess," said he, "but I did not speak."

An arch smile came over the face into which he looked.

"One does not have to speak aloud to let me read him," was the reply. "I am singularly gifted, my dear Count. I can read the lips."

"Oh! Yes, if Catherine could see the Countess Carloff there would be a ride to Siberia with no return."

"And she is very lovely. Look how she is being devoured by Colonel Daroski."

Orloff looked in the direction of his companion's glance and observed Paul in the shadow of a group of palms.

"I like him not," he growled.

"I do not blame you, Count. 'Tis rumored that he has made you a setting star."

"Don't madden me!" cried Orloff. "A setting luminary, am I? We shall see!"

He walked away, and presently entered a gorgeous side room where a number of noblemen were making merry. Beckoning to one of these, Orloff drew him aside and touched his arm.

"This night," said he, lowering his voice, "I am going to take the leap of my life."

"Over what precipice, Count?"

"Over the precipice of ruin perhaps," was the reply.

"But you are still in favor."

A haughty laugh parted Orloff's lips.

"It is a blow for stability, said Orloff. "So long as Paul Daroski lives I am in danger of being snuffed out."

"You, an Orloff?"

"Even I."

"Incredible!"

"Listen to me, Prince. I have five million rubles at my command. I have vast estates and thousands of serfs. Tonight I would give it all if the world were rid of yon Colonel of the Guards."

"That's a princely offer," said the other.

"Deprive Gregory Orloff of Catherine's favor, and the veriest beggar becomes his equal."

"I like him not. Did he not slay Topotkin?"

"Aye, that he did, and how did Catherine punish him? She loved him the more. I have not come hither tonight as mere spectator. I have laid certain plans. I have hazarded everything on a last throw of the dice of fortune. You are my friend, Prince?"

"To the end."

"In one hour meet me in the oval room in the west wing of the palace. Paul Daroski will be there."

"Yes."

"You have your sword, Prince. I have my hands and what can resist the hands of Orloff?"

The two men drew apart and the minutes waned. Near the end of the hour Count Orloff vanished and presented himself at the door of the oval apartment. For a moment he seemed undecided, but, goaded by a sudden impulse, he seized the knob and flung the door inward.

The Prince greeted him.

"You are on time," said Orloff, with a grim smile.

"I never lag in love or war," was the rejoinder. "But what has become of the Colonel of the Guards?"

"Wait! The leaven works. When he comes, Prince, I will open the ball. It is the easiest thing in the world to insult a lover. I am an adept in that art. You will get between him and the door. Make no false move. Our presence here is not suspected. A secret note will bring him here. He has it by now."

"Hark! He comes."

A footfall hurrying to the door startled the pair, and Orloff drew his glove.

"Let him in first," said he. "A glove can go as straight to the target as a bullet."

The sounds ceased at the door. There was a musical turning of the knob, and as Orloff raised his gantlet the portal swung wide. Xenia Carloff stood before the two men! Orloff's face went whiter than a burial shroud. She was radiant in her loveliness, and her ringing tones were gall to the Empress's favorite.

"I've been ransacking the whole palace for you, my dear Count Orloff!" she exclaimed. "Will you do me the honor of escorting me to the banquet?"

Count Orloff frowned. He had played his cards and lost, and he saw by Xenia's face that she knew why he was in the oval chamber.

Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Not Such a Fool.

There was a half-witted youth in Bridgetown to whom the neighboring farmers liked to offer a penny and a nickel.

Gathered about him in a circle on market day, the farmers, one after another, would say:

"Now, which'll yer have, Peter? Here's a cent—here's a nickel—take yer choice."

And fool Peter would invariably choose the cent rather than the nickel, and the farmers before such incredible foolishness would roar with laughter, double in two, and slap their legs noisily with their brown hands.

"Peter," a man said one day to the lunatic, "why is that you always take the cent instead of the nickel?"

Peter grinned a very cunning grin.

"Suppose I took the nickel," said he, "would I ever get a chance to take another one?"

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The Cabalistic Hand

Or, TELLTALE FINGERPRINTS

By George Ethelbert Walsh

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CHAPTER XXII.

MAXINE led me a chase that I shall long remember. Impelled forward by an impending sense of danger, and anxious to help him in the crisis, I followed from street to street, cutting across squares and small parks, vaulting high back-yard walls, and treading devious and unfamiliar paths. At times I lost sight of him and waited in baffled silence for his reappearance, but always I picked up the trail again, and renewed the chase. I felt sure that he was hot on the trail of the creature who had haunted and dogged our footsteps, and the fear that something tragic might happen to him gave me the strength and swiftness of a bloodhound

We crossed and recrossed familiar streets, doubling on our tracks many times, and taking the most unexpected turns and twists; but try as I would I could never quite reach his side. I dared not call aloud for fear of attracting some stray officer on guard; twice I had to dodge one of these silent guardians of the night, and once I barely saved myself from stumbling into the arms of one sleeping on his post. It might prove fatal to Maxine's purpose if I should start a hue and cry and have several bluecoats chasing us. From Maxine's movements I judged that he was circling and redoubling on his tracks to avoid collision with the policemen.

The wild chase seemed prolonged indefinitely. I was not sure just how long it did last. I know I was nearly exhausted, dirty with grime of the streets and walls, cut and bruised in hands and shins, wet with perspiration, and panting for breath at every step. The night dew was damp on my forehead, and chill began to penetrate to the very bones every time we halted for a moment to let an officer pass.

Finally, we came almost to the river's edge. I could see the trees on the bluff overlooking it, and the houses were growing fewer and further between. Great unoccupied lots yawned before us, with their queer collections of old tin cans, ashes, and other accumulations of a great city. Across one of these I stumbled and plunged head foremost in a mound of freshly-dumped ashes. The fine dust filled my eyes, mouth, and nostrils. I scrambled to my feet and cursed the city authorities who permitted the dumping of refuse in vacant lots with all sorts of garbage.

When I finally cleared my eyes of the ashes, I glanced ahead, fearful lest I had lost sight of Maxine; but fortunately he was in plain view. He stood on the edge of the bluff, clearly silhouetted against the dark gray of the heavens. For a moment he stood in plain sight, and then disappeared over the edge

Immediately I raced forward, careless of consequences. I stumbled twice, and barely caught myself in time to save a nasty fall. When I reached the edge of the bluff, panting and covered with dirt and ashes, I stopped long enough to take a quick survey of my surroundings.

I was standing on the summit of a wooded bluff that formed the outer edge of a strip of land the city some day intended to convert into a park. A wilder and more desolate region could not be well imagined. Except for a few stray goats and children, who played in the dirt among the rocks in the day time, it was a part of the city seldom visited. Thick vines ran rampant over the rocks and trees, forming a dense overgrowth for the barren ground, with here and there clumps of trees and bushes that held the soil from tumbling into the river that skirted the base of the undeveloped park

Close to the river edge there was a small woods, with undergrowth thicker than elsewhere, tall, gaunt trees casting their dark shadows around. I was just in time to see a shadowy figure disappear in the underbrush. I waited for no other evidence of my senses, but plunged down the embankment into the woods.

What followed next was all the result of accident. I thought once I saw the tiny flash of a light in the thicket, and this drew me in that direction; but when I reached the spot all was silent and deserted. Maxine had been there. I was certain, but he had disappeared as mysteriously as if the earth had suddenly opened and swallowed him. I stopped and listened. For a long time I remained motionless, hoping that he would betray his presence by a movement.

The thought then that Maxine might take me for his pursuing enemy and shoot caused the cold perspiration to break out all over. I decided to risk a call, and, lowering my voice to a sharp whisper, said repeatedly:

"Maxine! Maxine! Where are you? I'm Montague!"

But there was no answering response. Either he did not wish to betray his presence or he was beyond hearing distance. My whole chase apparently was doomed to failure. I had nothing to do but retrace my footsteps and wait for his return.

I was on the point of giving up the strange pursuit, when suddenly the tiny flash of light appeared again. It was like the flash of a firefly in the distance, but I knew at that time of the year these strange, phosphorescent creatures were not around. I plunged forward, keeping my eyes glued to the spot where the light had momentarily appeared.

Suddenly the earth seemed to open under me, and I found myself falling through space, hitting and scratching innumerable bushes and briers as I plunged downward. These broke the severity of my fall, and when I landed on my feet I found that I was not hurt, although considerably jarred in mind and body. I seemed to be at the bottom of a dark pit, whose sides were thickly lined with stubbly bushes and climbing vines. I groped around in the darkness, and found that my prison was narrow though deep.

Fortunately I had clung to my pocket flashlight, and with the aid of this I soon explored my surroundings. I was, indeed, in a deep hole, whose sides were deeply scarred by running water and covered with a great mass of dense foliage. I could easily climb up out of it by means of the bushes and vines, but something right ahead of me attracted my attention and took away all desire to extricate myself.

It was the flickering of a light that flashed intermittently, but it seemed to come from the earth below instead of from some point above. Strangely moved by this queer sight, I started toward it, pushing the briers and vines to one side as they obstructed my way.

Then with a sudden drop and jolt I plunged forward once more, and landed on a hard floor, with sides and roof of brick and stones. I flashed my light around and discovered to my surprise I was standing in the vaulted chamber of what seemed to be an old deserted sewer; but it was dry and very ancient of construction. The mortar of the walls had crumbled and fallen out years before, but the stones and bricks had been so carefully laid up that they held together by their own weight

This discovery made me for a time forget my mission, and I began studying the place with interest and wonder. The vaulted chamber ended or begun at the bottom of the hole, the entrance being ingeniously concealed by the rocks and vegetation. It was as if somebody had built it as a secret cache for treasures.

In the midst of my observations, the flickering light once more attracted my attention. It came from the far end of the tunnel, or abandoned sewer. It explained to me Maxine's sudden disappearance. He was working his way through the tunnel, using his flashlight at intervals to find his way.

The mystery of the subterranean passageway increased as I advanced in it, following the light ahead, and using my own electric bulb when occasion demanded. The light disappeared suddenly, and it was not until I reached a sharp bend in the tunnel that I understood Once more then I could see Maxine's lamp flash out of the murky darkness.

The tunnel grew damper and the air musty and foul, so that at times I halted in fear. To be entombed in that grewsome place would be a living death. The tunnel must have been constructed ages ago. There were no signs that water had ever passed through it, and the idea that it was an old abandoned sewer was untenable. But what other explanation could be given for its existence? And whither did it lead?

I should have retreated before I reached the end of it if Maxine had not been ahead. His presence there brought reassurance to my mind. His mission in the tunnel was beyond my imagination, and I simply followed him with the blind devotion of a servant. It dawned upon me once or twice that I was self-invited, and my presence there might be annoying to him. Maxine would not tolerate spying on his movements, and more than once he had rebuked me for too much devotion in this respect.

If I had stopped to analyze my motives I should have found that it was curiosity rather than any desire to lend assistance to him that induced me to explore the underground passage. The wonder of it made me forget for a time everything else. I wanted to see whither it led and what was at the other end.

Suddenly, after turning another sharp bend, the light of Maxine's lamp burned steadily and without a flicker; it seemed to stop as if the holder had reached his journey's end. I crept closer, bending and stooping to avoid hitting my head against the roof, but before I could get within hailing distance it disappeared entirely. I stopped and waited for its reappearance. It did not return directly, but a reflection of it lit up a portion of the bricked-up tunnel. It remained in this way for some time, and I waited patiently for it to recede or disappear entirely; but as it did not shift its position, I finally crawled forward more cautiously.

It was a weird, terrifying sight, this dim reflected light on the side of the tunnel, with nothing else to indicate from whence the light came, and I began to feel nervous and alarmed. The whole thing was beginning to resemble a dream, and I wondered if I was awake Perhaps the whole adventure was merely the fanciful result of a disordered brain. I began to doubt my own sanity.

A few minutes later I pushed forward again and came to another bend in the tunnel, and as I peered around the corner I repressed an exclamation of startled surprise with the greatest difficulty.

I was looking directly into a room of some kind, with a single feeble gas-jet burning from a side bracket, and seated at the far corner of the place was Max-

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ine, his pale, drawn face wreathed in a cunning smile. He was fumbling with a package he carried in his hands. I stared a moment, blinking and gasping, and trying in vain to collect my scattered wits. Something about the room recalled unpleasant memories. It seemed familiar, but I could not readily remember where I had seen it. It was not until Maxine got up and moved to a ladder leading to a door in the ceiling of the room that the truth flashed on my mind.

It was the coal cellar under the Seldon house! It was the place where we had spent so many hours looking for clews that would help us unravel the mystery of the trunk murder. After the first gasp of surprise, I gave a little murmur of exultation. Maxine had fathomed the mystery of the secret entrance. In some way he had learned Meteso's secret and had followed it to its source.

It was a triumph for him that would make the further solution of the trunk murder simpler. I gloated silently over his success, and for a moment I was so overjoyed that I nearly called out to him. But on second thought I considered it wiser to retreat and keep my information to myself. In due time Maxine would tell me of the secret passage and explain how he discovered it. It would prove a thrilling story, and I was not inclined to spoil it by a premature disclosure of my presence in the mysterious tunnel.

Fearing lest Maxine might return at any moment, I withdrew cautiously, and after reaching a safe distance I beat a hasty retreat. With the aid of my flashlight I picked up the devious windings and twistings of the tunnel, and soon found myself out in the fresh air again. The sight of the stars overhead and the feel of the soft night breeze fanning my cheeks brought a welcome sigh from my lips.

I scrambled out of the hole without much difficulty, using the scrub bushes and vines to help me, and when finally I stood on the top of the bluff again, I could have shouted for joy. It was the joy of having escaped from such a subterranean tomb and the relief of mind brought about by Maxine's discovery. It explained his queer actions and all the other circumstances of the adventure. The exploration of the secret passageway to the Seldon house would undoubtedly excite him so that he would hardly notice me. What led up to the discovery of the secret I could not even imagine; but that was merely a detail that could wait.

I hurried home, following the shortest cut, and although it was nearly morning, I flung myself on the bed and slept soundly. I did not even wait for Maxine to return, and when he entered the house I was oblivious of all sounds and sights. The happy reaction from the harrowing night's experiences induced peaceful, refreshing slumber that lasted far into the morning.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN I finally awoke the sun was well up in the heavens, and the great city had been busy for hours with its day's labors. A sense of elation possessed me, as I recalled the happy termination of the night's adventures, and I tumbled out of bed and dressed hastily. Maxine was already up, for I could hear him moving about downstairs.

Suddenly, in the midst of my dressing, I stopped and turned pale. Before me on the wall was the imprint of a bloody hand—not one, but several, as if some one had crept cautiously along the side of the room and planted his hand against the wall to steady himself.

All my troubled fear of that hand returned to me with a rush. It had haunted me awake and asleep; I had seen it in imagination imprinted on every conceivable article. Now, outlined in blood, the curves and lines took on a ghastly appearance that made me sick with dread.

All the joy and elation of my waking moments vanished. I felt as if some great cloud had suddenly obscured the light of day. For a moment I stood with dread and gazed at the marks; but regaining control of myself I advanced and took a closer scrutiny of the hand. I shuddered as a nearer inspection showed all that I had guessed. The hand had been dipped in blood, and with it, half-dried on fingers and palms, the imprint had been made. The whole hand was visible in outline, showing every finger as plainly as if traced by a pencil dipped in human gore.

Meteso had been in my room while I slept in the early hours of the morning. The bloody hand had not been there when I retired; he had visited me after the adventures of the previous night.

But what did the bloody hand portend? Had some crime been committed in the house, and had the murderer, in ghoulish glee, distributed these clews around intentionally, as if to defy us to do our worst? The very thought of it created a feeling of disgust and nausea, and I turned and fled from the room.

Maxine was in his office, looking pale and haggard, and upon my sudden entrance he rose with a look of inquiry.

"What is it, Montague? You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"I have," I muttered, "or something worse. He was here again last night—Meteso!"

"What message has he sent this time?" Maxine asked, scowling and striding toward me. "Where is it, Montague?"

"In my room," I replied, leading the way.

Unable to explain more in words, I ascended the stairs again with Maxine at my heels, and with a dramatic finger pointed to the bloody marks on the wall.

Even Maxine started and turned a shade paler at the sight. Heretofore the man had left his fingerprints only in dirt, ink, or some other harmless substance—except on that first occasion when the rag had been found in the Seldon home—but now they were written in blood.

Maxine whipped out his magnifying glass and applied his eyes close to the wall; he remained quiet and tense for some moments. Finally he removed the glass and shook his head slowly.

"Human blood, Montague," he said softly. "This means a crime has been committed. Go and see if all the servants are accounted for."

I hurried away on this errand, and returned with the reassuring message that nothing had happened to alarm the servants, and every one of them was safe and sound.

"Then the crime was committed elsewhere," mused Maxine slowly, "and he came here simply to defy us. It's remarkable, Montague—very remarkable! He seems determined to flaunt his defiance in our faces."

Once more he studied the bloody prints, measured them with a small ruler, and mentally compared them with those of another hand that was indelibly impressed upon our minds.

"Meteso is a monster," he said quietly, as if talking to himself, "and last night I was sure that he had left the city. Strange, very strange," stroking his chin, "I thought I had him located. Inspector McGonigle said he would have him brought back this morning. I was rather expecting him."

"You knew where he was hiding?" I asked.

"Yes, in Newark; he fled there, and to save time I had the Inspector send a man over to arrest him. I expected he would be here before long. I was preparing a little seance for him."

"And he was in the city all the time?"

"He might have run in for a short time, and then vanished again. But I'm afraid the Inspector's man will hardly capture him if he's as wily as that. I should have followed him up and made sure of him. Now I must trace him all over again. He's a very bold criminal, Montague, very bold—and foolhardy. I fear his rashness will be his undoing."

"Perhaps," I said a little doubtfully, "it was not Meteso after all.

"It's all the same handprint, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then Meteso is the man. If not, he can clear himself easily. If his fingerprints don't fit in with these, that will clear him. It's very simple, Montague, and there can be no mistake."

We returned to the office, after locking the door of my room, and Maxine consulted his watch.

"If the Inspector is coming with Meteso he should be here soon," he reflected. "I'll give him half an hour. If he's not here then, I'll give him up."

"Maxine!" I exclaimed, with bulging eyes, interrupting him suddenly. "Look! Look!"

I pointed at his desk before which he had been standing, and his eyes following my finger stared in wonder and consternation. On the desk clearly outlined in blood, was the thumb mark of our terrible enemy.

Maxine started back as if it had been a serpent, and his eyes bulged nearly as much as mine. He stood a moment in silent awe as if gazing at some miracle. His voice was thick and husky when he spoke.

"How did that get here?" he stammered. "It wasn't here a minute ago! Montague, what cursed thing is this that can drop his fingerprint out of the air and plant it before our very eyes? Are we dreaming or is this—this —"

He picked up the slip of paper and gazed at it, his hand trembling with extreme agitation. I watched him apply his glass, and heard him once more mutter:

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References: Third National Bank, Sedalia, Mo.
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"Human blood! Yes, it's the same."

The discovery of the handprints on the walls of my room was nothing to this new development; here were the marks flaunted in our face in broad daylight, even while we talked of the criminal. They had been made there during the few moments we spent upstairs. Maxine leaned over the paper once more to examine it.

"Yes," he muttered, "fresh blood. It has hardly dried on the paper. Montague, this print was made within the last ten minutes. Meteso must be in the house somewhere."

We looked at each other with startled eyes. Meteso in the house! How had he obtained entrance, and where was he hiding? Maxine quietly closed and locked the front door and slipped the key in his pocket.

"If he hasn't already escaped, we'll find him," he said. "You watch the front door and windows, Montague, while I search the place."

With pistol in hand I stationed myself near the front entrance and nervously and anxiously watched and waited. Maxine searched the office first; then the diningroom and parlor—all the first floor of the house; he ransacked every part of the basement and cellar, causing no little alarm among the servants, and finally ascended to the second and third stories. But the search was of no avail; there was no sign of the intruder, and when he returned to the office a puzzled, worried look gleamed in his eyes.

"Within hearing distance of us, and not caught!" he muttered. "This makes all past mysteries tame in comparison. Montague, what sort of creature is this Meteso that he can come and go at will without ever disclosing his presence? Has he some supernatural power? No, I'll not believe that. It's some Oriental trick that we are ignorant of."

He looked up at the ceiling as if expecting to find some clew there that would help solve the mystery, and then at the barred window.

"The men are coming today to put in new lights here," he said in a quiet matter-of-fact voice. "If they should come in my absence, I want you to stay with them."

"You don't think there's anything about the window that can explain this mystery, do you?" I asked.

"Montague," he replied slowly and deliberately, making the confession seriously, "I can't explain it. Meteso has got me guessing. I don't understand it."

Never before had I heard such words from Maxine's lips. They surprised and astonished me; they were the confessions of a baffled man. Maxine had met more than his match for the first time in his life.

"If Inspector McGonigle knew of this," he added grimly, after a while, "it would mean a mighty change in his estimate of me. Montague, I'm not sure but my reputation is blasted forever."

He dropped heavily in a chair and looked straight at me with eyes that were strangely lackluster. "And after I had grown tired of running petty criminals to earth, and believed there was no longer any master in the profession!" he added bitterly. "It's a judgment upon me. I can no longer face the Inspector and talk of his failures. I'm undone, Montague—undone!"

His head dropped in his hands, and for a few moments he remained quiet. I tried to encourage him with a few inept words of praise, but they fell as flat upon my ears as upon his. The great, indisputable fact remained that we had been baffled at every turn. Meteso could defy us with impunity, and every clew we had followed led to nothing.

Then suddenly the remembrance of the previous night's experience in the secret tunnel gave me new hope. At least Maxine had made an important gain in discovering that. He had solved the mystery of the secret entrance to the Seldon coal cellar, and that had seemed nearly as baffling to us as the bloody handwriting on the wall. It was unlike Maxine to be discouraged and cast down, and I straightway began to talk of those things that should encourage him.

"This mystery is after all no greater than that of the coal cellar, Maxine," I said, smiling at him. "We thought there was no adequate explanation of that until——"

"No," he replied dully, without raising his hand, "and it's still a black mystery. It is one of a series that leads up to this climax."

I frowned a little at this reply. He evidently did not care to tell me of his night's adventures, but under the circumstances I decided I had the right to confess my part in the affair.

"How can you say that, Maxine," I replied, "after last night's work?"

He looked up at me inquiringly.

"What work do you mean, Montague?"

I flushed under his calm scrutiny and bit my lip. I had hoped he would confess all, but he seemed determined to force me to explain my adventures in following him.

"It was a splendid night's work," I answered, laughing nervously. "Surely it should give you encouragement. We're that much nearer the solution."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Montague," he replied testily. Then suddenly he sprang from his seat and walked to the desk and picked up the paper splotched with blood.

"Yes, my reputation is at stake," he said sharply, ignoring me, "and I'll make good. I'll find Meteso and wring his secret from him." He consulted his watch again, and added, "If Inspector McGonigle isn't here within ten minutes, I'll go out and find Meteso."

He dropped the piece of paper back on the desk and turned abruptly, as if his mind had been made up for a desperate enterprise. Standing near him, I watched the change in his countenance, and breathed easier. I shuddered a little as I saw the familiar fingerprint on it. I had grown to hate and fear the sight of it. As I looked now it seemed to assume strange, fantastic shapes; the lines of the print shifted and changed, forming themselves into two prints instead of one. I narrowed and contracted the eyes to eliminate the double object, but squint as I would I could not do it. There were two thumbmarks instead of one.

I moved toward the desk and picked up the paper, but a nearer gaze did not obliterate either mark. My blood seemed to freeze within me, and my eyes widened in a steady stare. I closed them, and opened them again. There were still two thumbmarks on the paper—one fresher than the other, with the blood still wet and shining. I held the paper off and groaned.

"My God!" I exclaimed hoarsely.

Maxine swung around and stared at me.

"Do I see double?" I gasped. "Are there two thumbmarks there, or only one?"

Maxine snatched the paper from my hand. I watched his face pale as he scrutinized it carefully; then I knew that I was not mistaken. While we had been talking, a second bloody thumbprint had made itself visible on the paper.

"Montague!" faltered Maxine, huskily.

He could say no more; we stared at each other in dumb silence. What uncanny miracle had happened? What Oriental trick had Meteso performed? My nerves were strung to the snapping point, and Maxine's were not much less overwrought.

Suddenly I broke the stillness with a shrill laugh of relief. I was almost hysterical.

"It—it's your thumbmark, Maxine!" I cried. "See, your finger is bleeding; you've pricked it, and the thumb is bloody. What a scare it gave me! Ha! ha! It wasn't one of Meteso's tricks after all! Just a plain case of self-deception."

I laughed uproariously. Maxine stared at the thumbprint and then at his own hand. A prick of some sharp instrument had started fresh blood on one of his fingers, and the end of his thumb was smeared with it. He deliberately placed the thumb on the paper and made another print. I laughed again as he did so, and then stared stupidly at the result.

"It's yours," I said, in a voice of relief. "There's not the least doubt about it."

"Yes, Montague," he replied, in an awed voice. "It's mine—and so is this other one."

"Then—then——" I said thickly, my mind getting confused.

Hysteria was getting the better of me. I was seeing nothing but bloody fingerprints; they were all around me, stamped on everything.

"Montague," slowly, "they're all my thumb and fingerprints. They are——"

He broke off and staggered to the cabinet like a drunken man. He opened the drawer and hauled out the collection of fingerprints we supposed were those of our invisible foe. He compared them with the bloody prints on the paper, studying them carefully through his magnifying glass. I watched him with reeling eyes. When he groaned and slumped down in his chair he was the picture of despair and terror.

"Montague," he whispered, "they're mine—my fingerprints! What does it mean?"

This thrilling story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Some women get even with a man by refusing to marry him, and some others by marrying him.

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We have decided to give 100 fine, sturdy Citrus Fruit Trees FREE to everybody who buys one of these Florida farms during the year 1914—a full assortment of 100 Citrus Fruit Trees ABSOLUTELY FREE.

These trees, when delivered, will be from one and a half to two years old, budded on strong, hardy rough lemon and sour orange stock—good, sturdy, healthy young trees that compare favorably with those sold by the reliable nurseries at 45 to 85 cents apiece.

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It is the third great Hillsboro County tract that has been subdivided into small farms by our old established, responsible, thoroughly experienced organization. Over 2,500 families are now rejoicing because they bought at opening prices in our two former tracts. Every family can tell you they got a square and generous deal.

Our New Lithia Tract now offers you the same wonderful opportunity—and more, because of the rapid growth and development on all sides within the past four years. Our surveyors have completed their work of subdividing the New Lithia Tract into 10, 20, and 40 acre Citrus and Truck Farms, and it is now being thrown open to homeseekers and investors. Improvements of all kinds are going rapidly forward. Already buyers are building homes on our New Lithia Tract, and values are due to rise here just as they have in our two former suburban farm tracts in this same county.

The visible supply of select Hillsboro County grapefruit land is melting away very fast. Prosperous homes are scattered around this New Lithia Tract—grapefruit and orange groves are flourishing on all sides.

One judicious investment means more to your bank account than years of labor. Honestly, now, what have you to show for that little 3⅓ cents per day that might just as well be buying you one of these beautiful Hillsboro County farms? Where else could you put aside a few odd dollars so safely, so securely, and with such surety of seeing your modest savings fund develop into a great big investment? If you do not wish to improve your farm, you can in a few years cash in on it from the investment standpoint without a stroke of work on your part.

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Get the facts NOW. The coupon brings them to you without cost or obligation. Get your 1914 opportunity clearly before you while prices on this newly opened tract are still low and terms easy. Today $1 per acre per month buys you independence and a future. Tomorrow—who knows?

We have prepared a special bulletin and a large illustrated book which we will gladly send you free on receipt of the coupon. Tear it off and mail it NOW and we will lay before you, by return mail, full and complete information showing how you can easily become the owner of one of these beautiful Hillsboro County farms—including 100 fine, strong Citrus Fruit Trees FREE—and why it is sure to prove the shrewdest, most profitable investment you can possibly make.

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FREE—Use this Coupon to Get Your 100 Citrus Fruit Trees—FREE

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Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

No man is happy unless he thinks he is

Many a poor tune is played on a good horn.

Lazy men would rather find fault than find work.

You never have to dun a man who owes you a grudge.

Every time a girl's heart is broken she saves the pieces.

A woman sighs with regret; a man sighs with relief.

Few men are strong enough to keep their faces closed.

Many a courtship has been converted into a battleship.

A woman doesn't always better her mind by changing it.

A genius is a crank who gathers in a goodly supply of coin.

It's easier to fly into a rage than to succeed as an aviator.

It is easier for most of us to find fault than it is to find favor.

Any man's credit is apt to be good as long as his money lasts.

Give a blind beggar a dime and he may invest in an eye-opener.

Many a man fails to get there because he carries excess baggage.

Women are like men in one respect—they are all more or less vain.

It's better to wear out than rust out, but it requires more exertion.

Some spinsters advance step by step until they become stepmothers.

A great deal of what passes for dignity is nothing but genuine laziness.

The real hero of many a novel is the man who undertakes to publish it

The average man wastes enough time in silly talk to earn an honest living

You can expect your business to run itself—after perpetual motion has been discovered

It is foolish to become chummy with a man who treats his dog better than he does his wife.

A mother never disturbs the slumbers of her second baby to see if its eyes have changed color.

We once knew a girl who could keep a secret. She was engaged to a young man for three months before he even suspected it.

The old-fashioned woman who used to cry for what she wanted probably acquired as much happiness as the modern militant suffragette.

P E P P E R S

Force of Habit.

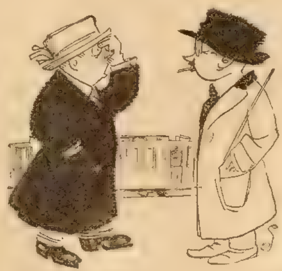
It was a street car conductor's duty in the church of which he was a member to take up the collection one day, and, as it happened, his first experience of such duties. He was a little nervous as he started down the center of the aisle, but that soon wore off and he began to feel almost at home.

There were several children in the first pew. Each put in a penny. The persons in the next row also contributed something each.

A big, glum fellow sat alone in the third pew. The new collector passed him the plate, but the man shook his head and stuck his hands deep into his pockets.

Thereupon our friend, the conductor, stopped, put up his hand as if to jerk the bell cord and said:

"Well, you'll have to get off."



Nevermore—There's one thing I'll never forget.

Whynot—"What's that?"

Nevermore—"Really, it's slipped my memory for the moment."

Work Rather Than Play.

Ten-year-old William came home one day in a regrettable state of disorder and with a somewhat bruised face.

"Oh, Willie! Willie!" exclaimed his mother, shocked and grieved "How often have I told you not to play with that naughty Johnson boy?"

"Mamma," said William, in utter disgust, "do I look as if I had been playing with anybody?"

Kept His Head.

"President Wilson's sang-froid is unfailing," said a diplomat; "as unfailing as his fund of anecdote.

"Apropos of the shipping rebate, I complimented the President on his sang-froid the other day. He replied, with his dry smile, that he tried to imitate the grave digger.

"A grave digger, he explained, had the habit of visiting the cemetery every night at about midnight to see that all was going well.

"Some boys decided to play a trick on him. They dug a trench in a dark spot which the grave digger always passed over, and one of their number, clothed in a white sheet, hid behind a tree.

"The grave digger at midnight duly appeared, and, sure enough, he stumbled and fell into the grave.

"Then the boy in the sheet stepped forth and said, in hollow tones:

" 'What are you doing in my grave?'

" 'What are you doing out of it?' the grave digger calmly replied."

A Better Chance.

They were talking about the medical fraternity at a recent social affair when Senator Benjamin T. Shively of Indiana recalled the case of Jake Adams, the farm hand.

One day Jake, who was new to the community, was taken ill, and his employer sent him with a note to the family doctor in town. On the following morning, the patient returned to the farm considerably improved.

"You are looking a whole lot better, Jake," remarked the boss. "Did you have any trouble finding the doctor?"

"No, his name was on the door," answered Jake, "but I didn't go to the one you sent me to."

"You didn't," wonderingly responded the farmer, "why not?"

"Because," replied Jake, "under his name on he door it said 10 to 1, while under the name of the other doctor was 8 to 5."

"Well, what in the world has that got to do with it?" demanded the puzzled farmer.

"Everything," answered Jake, "8 to 5 is a whole lot better chances than 10 to 1, ain't it?"

Just in Time.

There is a delicious flavor about this story of a Virginia lady, married to a man who, though uniformly unsuccessful in his hunting trips, boastingly spoke of his "killings"

One day, returning from a trip, with the usual accompaniment of an empty bag, it occurred to him that his wife would make fun of him if he returned without even one proof of his oft-boasted skill. So he purchased a brace of partridges to deceive his trusting spouse. As he threw them on the table in front of her, he observed: "Well, my dear, you see I am not so awkward with the gun after all."

"Dick," replied the wife, turning from the birds with a grimace, after a brief examination, "you were quite right in shooting these birds today; tomorrow it would have been too late."

Her Own Orders.

The mistress came downstairs and tried the door of the sittingroom, only to find it locked against her, while the key, which was usually in the lock, was missing.

"Bridget, I can't get into the sitting-room," she cried.

"Shure, it's meself knows that; an' ye won't fur I hev th' kay in me pocket."

"Open the door immediately."

"Will yez go in if I do?"

"Certainly I will."

"Then yez won't get the kay."

"Open the door, I say. What do you mean?"

"Shure, it's by your own orders. Just yesterday ye said, 'Don't let me come downstairs in the morning an' see any dust on the sittingroom furniture.' So I just puts the kay in me pocket, an', says I, 'Then she shan't!' "

Thought She Asked Him.

Down in the Red River Valley section of Louisiana there is a planter, a veteran of the Civil War, who is noted for his profane vocabulary.

Not long since he married and everything sailed along nicely for a few days But the Captain was called out early one morning by a negro tenant, who wanted to see him on business. As soon as the Captain saw the darky, he began to curse him.

His young wife, hearing the violent language, stuck her head out of the window and asked: "Is that you, dear?"

Before the Captain could answer, the darky said, apologetically: "No, ma'am dat's Cap'n Johnson."—Judge.

Merely Empties.

In a town in western Kansas the city weather was being discussed by two traveling men.

Little puffs of white clouds were rolling by, and one of the men remarked "That certainly looks like rain."

"No chance," the other replied; "those are just empties coming back from Iowa."

Stops Tobacco Habit in One Day

Sanitarium Publishes Free Book Showing How Tobacco Habit Can Be Banished in From One to Five Days at Home.

The Elders Sanitarium located at 696 Main St., St. Joseph, Mo., has published a free book showing the deadly effect of the tobacco habit, and how it can be banished in from one to five days at home.

Men who have used tobacco for more than fifty years have tried this method and say it is entirely successful, and in addition to banishing the desire for tobacco has improved their health wonderfully. This method banishes the desire for tobacco, no matter whether it is smoking, chewing, cigarettes or snuff dipping.

As this book is being distributed free, anyone wanting a copy should send their name and address at once

RECIPE FREE—

To those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor. This recipe has more rejuvenating and vitalizing force than any other remedy that has ever been offered. Just drop a line like this: Interstate Remedy Co., 7200 Goodyear Building, Detroit, Mich., and we will send you a copy of this splendid recipe free of charge.

Free Asthma Cure.

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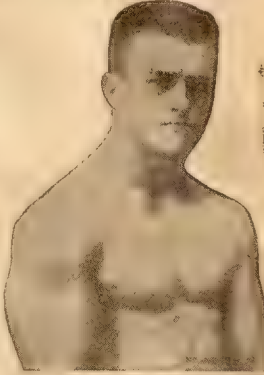

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Dick o' the Dark

Or, The Night Hawks of '76

By Captain Jack Judson

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Begun in No. 8, February 21. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

TIGERS IN RED.

IT WAS fortunate for Dick o' the Dark that he was not recognized by the three red-coated British dragoons who surprised him with Emily in the livingroom of the Scruggs home. The moment was one fraught with peril, for if the boy had been known in his partisan capacity he would have been pounced upon by Tarleton's men and dragged off without ceremony.

"What ho!" cried the foremost of the marauders, with a gruff [illegible], as he surveyed the astonished pair. "Love-making, are ye?"

"Not at all, sir," exclaimed Emily, blushing. "Are you not the King's men?"

"That we are, and glad to be such," responded the trooper. "We are hot on old Morgan's trail. Maybe you can tell us where his outposts are."

"We do not keep tab on General Morgan," and Emily threw a swift glance toward Dick. "We have enough to do these times to keep ourselves in sight."

"Well said," laughed the dragoon. "Well, we will leave you to your love-making. Come, boys," and they withdrew.

"That was a close call," said Dick when he found his tongue and heard hoofbeats beyond the house. "When I saw those fellows I feared I had been betrayed by Patrick Malloy, or some other Tory. Tarleton's men, eh? That means that the countryside must be warned."

"At once," assented Emily. "The wolves have crossed the border and erelong the whole pack will be down upon us."

In a little time Dick o' the Dark was once more in the saddle, and his good horse, Lightning, was flying swiftly through the night. The three troopers rode in another direction, and drew rein in front of Patrick Malloy's house. The old Tory greeted them effusively, and invited them inside to partake of his wines. It was a merry crowd that sat down at his table.

"By the way, Friend Malloy," said the head dragoon, "we had an adventure tonight. Back yonder we came upon two young lovers and nearly frightened them out of their wits."

"Where, pray?"

"At the house just beyond the hills."

Instantly Malloy's face whitened.

"A boy and a girl, eh?" he queried.

"Yes."

"And you let the boy escape you?"

"Why not?"

"Why, sirs, he is the famous Dick o' the Dark, the worst Rebel in the whole district. He is, moreover, a highwayman who robs the King's people right and left, and who deserves a good hanging to the nearest limb."

"You don't tell me?" and the dragoons exchanged glances.

"It's too bad. You could have done Colonel Tarleton a signal service by taking that boy."

The leader of the scouts sprang to his feet and struck the table with his clenched hand.

"We'll go back and get him," he cried. "By Jove! he shan't get away this time. To horse, hearties!" and leaving the wines on the table, all darted away leaving Malloy in a state of joyous excitement.

"I'll be rid of Dick o' the Dark now!" exclaimed the old Tory. "They'll take him to Tarleton, and short shrift will be his deserved doom."

Meantime the three dragoons were on the road back to Emily's home. Their steeds spurned the ground as they flew along, and in a short time the patriot girl heard them dismount at the porch. Her uncle had not returned, and she would have to face the marauders alone.

They tramped across the porch, and were soon thundering at the door with the butts of their pistols. Concealing her fears as well as she could, Emily crossed the floor and opened the portal.

"We're back again," said the chief dragoon, as he saluted her. "We want the lad whom we saw here a short time ago."

"He is not here," answered Emily, cool enough now.

For a moment the men looked nonplused; then one stepped into the room and turned fiercely upon the young miss.

"You've hidden him in the house!" he exclaimed, his face flaming with rage. "We know who he is now. He is Dick o' the Dark, and we want to introduce him to Colonel Tarleton."

"But I assure you that he is not in the house," persisted Emily.

"Of course, you, being Rebel, would shield him," was the retort. "Tell him to come out from hiding and face the music."

"That I cannot do, because he is not here."

"You are alone, then?"

"I am alone."

"Where is your uncle?"

"He went down the creek to a neighbor's three hours ago."

"Then we'll search the Rebel nest," was the rejoinder, "and if we find Dick o' the Dark, you shall see a pretty scene."

Emily bit her lips and leaned against the table. One of the dragoons snatched up the candle and made for an adjoining room.

"The house is at your disposal," the girl said. "I will ask you to respect it."

"Of course we respect every Rebel nest," sarcastically answered the trooper. "You may be thankful that we don't burn this one over your head."

From room to room went the men in red. Emily heard them everywhere. Now they were upstairs looking into every corner, and now in her own chamber, overturning everything movable and uttering mad curses all the time.

At last they trooped back into the room which she occupied. Their faces showed their disappointment and chagrin.

"Why didn't you tell us who your guest was?" demanded one of the trio.

"You never asked me," calmly replied the girl.

"I see. You were shielding his identity."

She did not speak.

"I say, boys, let's burn the nest," and the man turned to his fellows, who greeted his suggestion with approving looks.

The face of the patriot girl went white as ashes. The captain of the three still carried the candle, and all at once he snatched a book from a shelf and began to tear out the leaves for the purpose of making a bonfire.

"I thought you were honorable soldiers," said Emily, as she watched the proceedings.

"We are serving the King, and must subdue these rebellious colonies with fire and sword."

"And make war on the unprotected and helpless."

The burly fellow paid no attention to these words, but went on preparing for his fiery work. When he had finished he stooped and held the candle close to the torn paper.

"Brute!" flashed the white-faced girl, darting forward, and the next moment she had kicked the leaves in every direction. "It is a pity Dick o' the Dark is not here to show you what cowards you are!"

The dragoon started forward with an oath, and ordered his companions to seize and hold the brave patriot girl.

"Don't touch me!" she exclaimed, springing back and snatching from a hook on the wall an old-fashioned sword which she gripped with the determination of resistance.

"Bless me! The Rebel lamb is going to show fight," laughed the trooper. "Now more than ever should we fire this hated nest as a warning to other Rebels."

Emily stood in the candlelight with the weapon in her hand, her rich, dark eyes flashing.

"Let her have it a while longer," one of the others, seemingly more merciful, began to plead. "Wait till the army comes, and then —"

"We can have a real bonfire? That's a good idea, Jasper." He set the candle on the table. "We'll scout round for Dick o' the Dark, and when we've found him we'll come back and toss him into the ruins of this Rebel lair."

They moved toward the door after this threat, watched all the time by the girl, and she was relieved when she heard them mount their steeds outside.

"Wait!" suddenly cried the captain. "Maybe there's gold in the place. I'll go back and make the lass disgorge."

He leaped to the ground, and suddenly presented himself to the girl.

"Where's your wealth?" he demanded.

"There's no gold in the house. You must think we people have the wealth of Midas after we've been plundered time and again by the King's men."

"Show me your purse, anyhow."

Emily went to the cupboard and took out a little leathern purse, which she threw upon the table.

"Four shillings and sixpence!" derisively cried the man, as he emptied the contents of the purse on the cloth.

"Surrender!" came in loud tones to his ears from the outside.

The dragoon darted toward the door and out into the night. There was a crackling of firearms on the frosty air and then the scampering of horses.

"Dick!" cried Emily, as the young Night Hawk presented himself in the doorway.

"Yes, just in time, I reckon. I met the boys who told me that the redcoats had come this way and so I led them back. One of the rascals is lying in the road; the others got away. I wish we could have finished the whole lot!" and Dick's face flushed with animation.

CHAPTER V.

TURNING THE TABLES.

THE advance of Tarleton's redcoats threw the whole district into a state of consternation. Nearly everybody thought of fleeing before the horde. It was well known that the enemy would not spare any one, for the country had suffered so often from these invasions, and more than one bore testimony to the ruthlessness of the foe.

The rage of the Tories against Dick o' the Dark was boundless. They had long wanted to entrap the daring boy, but he had always eluded them. The little band which he commanded had inflicted a good deal of injury to the King's cause, and it was believed that they would join

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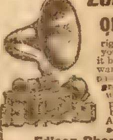

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Morgan's army and meet the British in open field.

It was the night after Dick's last exploit when he might have been heard galloping across the country. The moon had not risen, and the landscape was clothed in darkness. Already the advance guards of Tarleton's force had penetrated into the neighborhood and the whole district trembled.

Dick this time was not alone. Tiny Tom, the border minstrel, rode at his side, and now and then he sang his n[illegible]

“[illegible] wonder if you can fight as well as [illegible] can sing?” observed Dick, with a [illegible]

“I have never been tried,” was the reply. “You know, I have never had a chance to use the weapons you gave me, Master Dick, and I long to try them.”

“You may have a chance tonight, for we are going to watch a certain place.”

“That's good, Dick.”

“I've learned that a visit is to be paid to Granny Moore down on the Pacolet.”

“By whom?”

“Not by her friends. Granny has been active against the Tories, and they long to pay her back.”

“Surely they wouldn't harm an old woman like her.”

“These rascals are ready to do anything that's mean. Now, I don't know when the visit is to be made, but I am going down to her house to see if they have been there.”

“And we'll try our weapons if necessary?”

“That we will, Tom.”

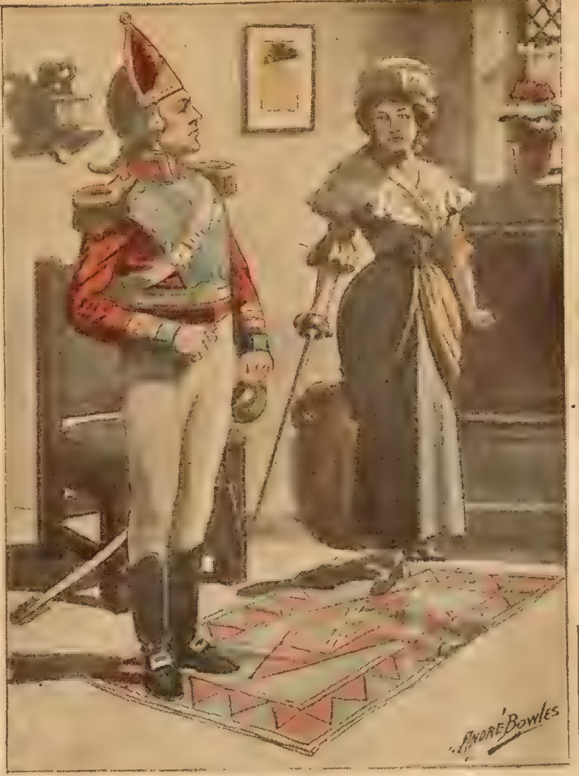
A few minutes later the boys drew rein at the forks of the road, and Dick turned to his young companion.

“Granny's house is right over yonder,” said he. “We'll skirt round it and come up in the rear.”

The detour was made, and presently Dick and Tom, the Singer, approached a lonely house. Everything was still.

“I guess Granny's not at home,” the little minstrel observed.

Before Dick could reply a shriek rent the air, and Tom, with a start, looked wildly at the boy partisan.



“Don't touch me!”

“They've caught Granny!” cried Dick.

“The Tories?”

“The cutthroats! Come, Tom. Keep close to me.”

Dick urged his horse forward, and in a little while was near the house.

“Sure they've caught her!” Tom exclaimed. “Aren't you going to help her, Dick?”

“We'll investigate first,” was the reply.

It did not take long for the two boys to discover that the widow's house was occupied by some men whose figures they could make out by the light of the candle.

“There's a redcoat with them,” said Dick, after a minute's inspection.

“I can see his uniform.”

“Well, I want the soldier,” and Dick's lips came together with emphasis.

Further observation revealed an old woman tied in a chair and five men standing over her in a threatening manner. Granny Moore was one of the most harmless creatures of the district, a ministering angel in cases of sickness, and a mother to the motherless. It was iron in Dick's soul to think that she should be pounced upon by a set of miscreants and mistreated.

“A little nearer, Tom,” whispered Dick o' the Dark. “They are not looking for us, and think that their visit has escaped notice.”

Slowly and noiselessly the steeds approached the house, and at length Dick leaped to the ground and handed Lightning's rein to the boy bard. He moved forward with caution and cocked the pistol he carried.

“Tell us where you hide your money,” demanded one of the men.

“I have no money. I have given my last shilling to Widow Bitler, whose house was burned last week by the Night Vultures.”

“Oh, you're not the woman to give up your last penny! You've got more hid away.”

“On my honor, I have not.”

Dick noticed that all the men save the soldier were masked, which indicated Tory cowardice. They were really neighbors of the lone creature whose home they had raided, and were afraid to show her their faces.

“If you don't give up your money,” resumed the big leader of the party, “we'll hold a candle to your feet and burn them into a crisp.”

“You can do what you please, for I am in your power.”

The next minute the woman's shoes were torn from her feet, and one of the villains jerked the light from the table.

“Now for a cooking,” he exclaimed to his companions. “We'll get the money or have a burning.”

The boy in the front yard saw the old face grow as white as ashes. Granny Moore was fortifying herself for the ordeal, and her lips were welded. The soldier who had no more mercy than the Tories was enjoying the scene, for his heart was as callous as theirs.

“For the last time where is the gold?” cried the man with the candle.

“I have answered you. There isn't a penny in the house.”

“Touch her feet, Byrd. Give her a taste of what is coming if she don't shell out.”

This was more than Dick could stand. A bound carried him upon the porch, and his hand was on the door latch. In another second he had pushed it open and was on the threshold.

“That's enough!” rang out his voice.

The clarion tones seemed to reverberate through the entire house. The candle nearly fell from the hand that held it. Every man turned to the door.

“Stand where you are!” commanded the fearless boy. “The first hand that moves toward a weapon will drop in death.”

“It's Dick o' the Dark,” went from lip to lip.

“I'm Dick, the avenger,” said the youth. “When a lot of sneaking Tories attack a lone woman, it's time for King George to call a halt.”

The soldier stepped aside.

“Stand!” cried Dick, who caught the movement. “You'll get your discharge if you stir another inch.”

The trooper stood like a statue.

“Now, my hearties,” the Night Hawk continued, “you will remove your masks.”

There were sudden starts at this command, and the eyes that shon[illegible] the dark clothes seemed to [illegible]somely into their sockets.

“I mean what I say [illegible] want Granny Moore to [illegible] to whom [illegible] owes this swoop.”

The silence that followed his words seemed palpable.

“Be quick about it. I shall count three, and the man whose mask is not on the floor then will get a ball through his brain.”

“He can't kill more than one,” [illegible] one said, and the words rea[illegible]

“I [illegible] not [illegible] alone,” said he. “You don't know how many rifles are covering you from the dark.”

This seemed to cow the whole lot. Mask after mask was hurriedly torn from faces and cast upon the floor.

“Just as I thought,” cried Dick. “Silas Gaffney, Pat Malloy, Reuben Silt, and Lot Doup. A pretty lot of buzzards, on my life! Just the sort of rascals to serve a king. Look at them, Gra[illegible]. They all belong to the same nest.”

The old woman ran her eye down the line, and a smile illumined her wrinkled countenance.

“Now,” Dick went on, “since Granny Moore hasn't any money and may need some to help the poor, you will empty your purses into her lap. Come, be quick about it.”

It was the menace of the cocked pistol that carried out the command. Jingling gold and silver fell indiscriminately into t[illegible] woman's lap.

“N[illegible] get out of the house, you T[illegible],” were Dick's next words. “The King's soldier will remain.”

The boy stepped aside to let the discomfited men pass out into the night, and returned their looks with compound interest. A more dejected lot of scoundrels never slunk into the darkness.

“Cut the old lady loose,” said Dick to the dragoon. “There that's right. N[illegible] sir, you are my prisoner.”

“What!”

“Just what I've said. You've got pretty strong arms, Granny Moore. Take your bonds and tie that redcoat's hands behind his back. Oh, he'll submit! If he doesn't Tarleton will lose a dragoon.”

The old woman was glad to carry out Dick's orders, and in a trice the soldier was secured.

“What are you going to do with me?” asked the fellow.

“I'm going to send you to Morgan,” answered Dick. “You've been looking for him, and it's but right that you should find your quarry. Forward march!” and muttering vengeance, the prisoner walked from the house with Dick's pistol at his head.

CHAPTER VI.

A PRISON FOR A SONG.

“THESE young rascals must be suppressed. We have put up with their night riding too long. Only last night Dick o' the Dark carried off one of the King's soldiers, and by this time he is in the hands of Morgan. It's too bad.”

These words spoken by Patrick Malloy were addressed to a lot of Tories who had assembled at his house. They had been called together by the old man, and every one of them applauded his utterances.

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BURNERS make any kerosene lamp or lantern give a brilliant white light better than electricity or gas. Doubles your light. Saves oil. NO MANTLE TO BREAK. Guaranteed Safe and Reliable. Delights every user. Send now for complete sample postpaid 35c, stamps or coin. 3 for $1. MONEY BACK IF NOT SATISFACTORY. Live Representatives Wanted. Exclusive Territory.
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Sell OUR guaranteed ladies' garments, embroideries, fancy goods and dress good for LESS money and make BIGGER profits! Cash or credit. Exclusive territory. Fashion Book and dress goods samples free. Write today.
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DON'T ACCEPT an agency until you get my samples and particulars. MONEY MAKERS. Address SAYMAN 604 Sayman Building, St. Louis, Mo.

WANTED Agents to sell Home Remedies. Write HOME REMEDY Co., Fredonia, N. Y.

WE WANT YOU
[illegible] Complete outfit FREE. [illegible]

AGENTS Let us show you the best paying canvassing business in the United States. Write today to the largest makers of transparent handled knives and razors for proof. A postal card will do. $1500 a Year Sure
NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., 23 Bar St., CANTON, OHIO

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS: $6 PER DAY AND UP
MEN AND WOMEN
Out of work? Got a lot of spare time? Handling a poor line now? We want an active man or woman in each town to open an agency for our famous
NON-ALCOHOLIC FOOD FLAVORS
Colors, Soaps, Perfumes, Toilet Preparations, etc. Over 100 different varieties. Flavors put up in tubes, not bottles. Fast sellers, steady repeaters. Every home a customer. Commissions paid in real money—$4, $6, $8, $10 a day. Little or no capital required. Experience unnecessary. Full instructions for beginners. Fine light sample case FREE furnished. Write for full particulars.
ZANOL PURE FOOD PRODUCTS
ACT QUICK WRITE TO DAY
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150 “live wire” workers at once. My proposition is a whirlwind. If you want to earn big money, here's your chance. I'm an old agent myself—made my six story factory by hustling.
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FITS YOUR OLD LAMP.
100 Candle Power Incandescent pure white light from (kerosene) coal oil. Beats either gas or electricity. COSTS ONLY 1 CENT FOR 6 HOURS. We want one person in each locality to whom we can refer new customers. Take advantage of our Special Offer to secure a Beacon Burner FREE. Write today. AGENTS WANTED.
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Mauller raked in $58 first 10 hours, clear profit, selling Improved EASY Iron. Agents getting rich. Women crazy for it. Saves steps, time, work, fuel. Pays for itself quickly. Big profit on every sale. Sells 8 out of 10 homes. Guaranteed. Write today for special terms. Foote Mfg. Co., Box 702 Dayton, O.

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An entirely new plan for selling guaranteed hosiery for men, women and children. All styles and grades. The most attractive offer ever heard of. Agents having wonderful success. Mrs. M. Schurman sold $900 in her spare time; L. Davis sold $1160.40; C. G. Standiford averaging $10 a day; Chas. Brineman making $6 a day. Write quick for particulars and free sample offer. THOMAS HOSIERY CO., 517 Rome Street • DAYTON, OHIO

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Sell Magnetic Combs and get rich, agents wild with success. They remove dandruff; stop falling hair; RELIEVE HEADACHE; never break. Send 2c stamp for sample. PROF. LONG, 914 Ash St., Pekin, Illinois

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Write Us

Good News for
The ONE-ARMED and
ARMLESS

Actual photos of Mr. C. E. Huffman, Hickory, N. C. [illegible] only one of the many things he does with a

Carnes Artificial Arm

He writes: "I feed, dress and shave myself; carry my suit [illegible]; open and close a door; open drawer of [illegible] what I want and close it again. They [illegible] easy to operate."

With a Carnes Artificial Arm You can do writing, drawing, sharpen lead pencil, use telephone, clean teeth, lace or button shoes, put on glove, [illegible] coat, tie cravat, brush hair, run automobile, [illegible], drive horses, play pool or billiards, do [illegible], ironing, sweeping and many other things [illegible] impossible but absolutely true. Endorsed by Surgeons. [illegible]

Our Guarantee Offer. [illegible]

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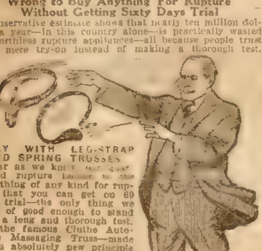
New York, 501 [illegible] Bldg. Chicago, New York Life Bldg.
Pittsburg, 704 Arrot Building. Seattle, 2122 Westlake Ave.

$10,000,000 A Year Wasted On Trusses

Wrong to Buy Anything For Rupture Without Getting Sixty Days Trial

A conservative estimate shows that nearly ten million dollars a year—in this country alone—is practically wasted in worthless rupture appliances—all because people trust to a mere try-on instead of making a thorough test.



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So far as we know, our guaranteed rupture [illegible] is the only thing of any kind for rupture that you can get on 60 days trial—the only thing we know of good enough to stand such a long and thorough test. It's the famous Cluthe Automatic Massaging Truss—made on an absolutely new principle—has 18 patented features. Self-adjusting. Does away with the misery of wearing belts, leg-straps and springs. Guaranteed to hold at all times—including when you are working, taking a bath, etc. Has cured in case after case that [illegible] hopeless.

Write for Free Book of Advice—Cloth-bound 104 pages. Explains the dangers of operation. Shows just what's wrong with elastic and spring trusses, and why druggists should no more be allowed to fit trusses than to perform operations. Exposes the [illegible] shows how old-fashioned worthless trusses are sold under false and misleading names. Tells all about the care and attention we give you. Endorsements from over 5000 people, including physicians. Write to-day—find out how you can prove every word we say by making a 60 day test without risking a penny.

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PILES CURED AT HOME BY NEW ABSORPTION METHOD

If you suffer from bleeding, itching, blind or protruding Piles, send me your address, and I will tell you how to cure yourself at home by the new absorption treatment, and will also send some of this home treatment free for trial, with references from your own locality if requested. Immediate relief and permanent cure assured. Send no money, but tell others of this offer. Write today to Mrs. M. Summers, Box 437, South Bend, Ind.

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Opium and all drug habits. Hundreds of testimonials prove that our painless home remedy restores the nervous and physical system and removes the cause. Write us in confidence.

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FREE WATCH, RING & CHAIN Handsome Watch, Guaranteed Timekeeper, also Ring & Chain [illegible] free for selling only 20 [illegible] at 10c each. Write [illegible].

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EASY MONEY [illegible] 10c [illegible] Address, McKINLEY CO., Dept. 7, WINONA, MINN.

You Can Make $8.00 PER 100 COLLECTING your neighbors names for our Directory. All kinds of names wanted. Send 10 cents postage for blank book and outfit. We want a million names quick. WATSON & CO., McKINLEY PARK, CHICAGO, ILL.

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Old Coins WANTED. $1 to $600 paid for hundreds of coins dated before 1894. Send 10c for our Ill. Coin Value Book. It may mean your fortune. OLD COIN CO., 308 EAST 51st ST., CHICAGO

"Of course," ventured Master Silt, "you've got to catch your fox before you skin him."

"Sure we have, Master Silt," answered Patrick, "but this young Reynard is going to be skinned just the same. None of us are safe so long as he flies by night over our roads. Colonel Tarleton and his men are in the district, and we will lack in loyalty to our King if we don't apprehend Dick o' the Dark. He laughs at our placards, and generally leaves some sarcastic writing underneath them."

It was unanimously resolved by the gathering that new measures should be taken to capture Dick. His band consisted of a dozen boys of his own age, and they were fearless and gave the Tories a great deal of trouble.

"There's another youth whom I'd like to catch," put in one of the Tories, "and that is the young scamp who makes songs about us. They call him Tiny Tom, and he rides with Dick o' the Dark on his forays. He's a pestiferous little hornet, and his songs sting like fury. I thought I had him once, but he slipped through my fingers like an eel."

"If Tom is the person you want, Master [illegible], I can tell you where he is at this minute."

"Out with it, and we'll lay hands on the [illegible]."

"He [illegible] Colfax's on the west road."

[illegible]

"He was [illegible] when I came along [illegible] the crowd."

[illegible] said Patrick Malloy.

Forthwith the two men withdrew from the assemblage and rode away. In less than an hour the hoofbeats of their horses were heard and to the delight of Malloy's [illegible] Tiny Tom was thrown, bound, into the [illegible].

The captors had better luck than they expected, for the young minstrel was captured without much trouble, and as he lay on the floor he was roundly cursed by the Tory band.

"I guess you won't make any more songs about us," [illegible] Malloy, eyeing the captive with [illegible] looks. "We've put up with your doggerel till we've grown tired of it. Why don't you sing something good about the King?"

Tiny Tom's black eyes seemed to snap. "You've never asked me to," said he.

"Well, we ask you now," returned Patrick. "Since you're glib enough to compose songs about the Rebels and Washington, you're surely smart enough to sing nicely for King George."

"I'll try," was the reply.

The boy was lifted from the floor and seated in a chair.

"Now let us have something nice," commanded Malloy. "None of your Rebel trash, mind you."

They gathered about Tiny Tom and waited for the expected song. A moment's silence ensued, and then the following rose strong and clear from the boy's lips:

"King George, he rules across the sea,
Oho, oho!
A mighty cruel man is he,
Oho, oho!
I hear that he says every day
That he'll subdue America
But not while Washington has his way,
Oho, oho!

The face of every Tory grew red.

"That's enough!" roared Patrick Malloy, stamping his foot till the floor trembled. "We don't want that sort of song."

"But you wanted something about the King, didn't you?" asked Tiny Tom with a look of mock innocence.

"That's a Rebel song. Try again and see if you can't do better."

"Very well," was the response.

"I wish that I could wear a crown
Over the sea in London Town,
I'd have my will in every way,
And call my troops from America;
Alas! alas! I'm not the King,
Only a boy who likes to sing;
I'd sooner be Tiny Tom than he
The King who'd crush out liberty!"

"Oh, you little shrimp!" cried Malloy, springing forward and jerking the boy from the chair. "I'm minded to break every bone in your Rebel body."

The fearless boy looked the ruffian fairly in the face. He did not tremble.

"I say, men, what shall we do with this young scamp?"

"[illegible] him!" came from more than one person [illegible].

"[illegible] him!" cried others.

"[illegible] better. We'll put him in the cellar and hand him to Colonel Tarleton [illegible]. They'll turn him over to him, and let justice take its course."

"That's right," was heard on every side, and Tiny Tom was escorted away by a powerful slave who bore him to the cellar door and hurled him down the dark steps.

"I never saw such a [illegible] boy," remarked Malloy. "He's Rebel to the backbone."

"As bad as Dick o' the Dark."

Meantime Tiny Tom had picked himself up and was listening as close to the roof of the cellar as he could

could plainly hear the voi

secutors.

"Tomorrow night," he

say, "we meet at Maste

onel Tarleton is to be

instructions how to aid him. We must all be there. It will be an important meeting. By that time we may be able to catch Dick o' the Dark, and then you will see something dangle from the limb of Master Silt's tree."

Tom heard the meeting break up with promises from all to be at the rendezvous the following night.

"I wish I could get out and tell Dick," thought he. "He might be on hand and catch Colonel Tarleton himself. But how am I to escape from this dungeon?"

When the house had grown still he made a circuit of the cellar, sounding every foot of the cold stone walls. Liberation seemed out of the question. The place was as dark as Erebus, and now and then great rats ran over his feet and made the place hideous with their [illegible] squeals. At length he ceased his efforts for liberty, and found a seat on a cask where he was out of the way of the rodents.

Presently the cellar door opened and a man with a candle appeared. It was his jailer, Patrick himself, and he held the light so that it fell upon the little prisoner's face.

"How do you like it?" derisively asked the Tory.

"It wouldn't be so bad if it weren't for the rats," answered Tom with a grin.

"They're good company, no doubt," was the malicious rejoinder.

"Very [illegible], Malloy."

"Well, you stay there till you see Colonel Tarleton. He'll put a crimp in your [illegible]."

Tiny Tom wanted to reply to this threat, but [illegible] silence. He was relieved when the man with the light went away, and for the next few minutes he listened to the squeaks of the legion of rats.

Once more he began to inspect the old cellar. All at once at the foot of the wall his hands came in contact with an opening which he knew was a drain.

"If I could squeeze my body through this drain," [illegible], "I might give Master Malloy the slip. But it's a hard task, and there's no telling where the mouth of the drain lies."

It was taking desperate chances, but the boy realized that he was in a desperate situation and something had to be done. In a few moments he had divested himself of his outer garments and had forced his little body into the dark opening. Inch by inch he crawled along, now pausing for a moment to rid himself of the rats that tried to gnaw his feet, and now to catch his breath in the noisome place.

Was there no end to the old drain? It seemed to grow longer as he advanced, and more than once he thought of going back and taking the consequences. But when he thought of falling into the hands of the merciless Tarleton, this thought instantly vanished and he went on. At last a puff of cool air touched his face. He almost shouted for joy.

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As usual we are ahead of the rest. Ahead in style—ahead in quality—ahead in designs—ahead in price and ahead in terms. So far ahead that you will be behind the times if you do not wear one of our new, nobby suits this spring.

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In order to develop business we are [illegible] new Common Stock which will be sold privately [illegible] to avoid [illegible] [illegible] Net [illegible] standing. Balance of $1,000 [illegible] in lots of $200 to $1,000 at par value $100 per share. Write for full particulars and Accountant's Report. Address

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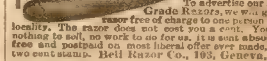
Ladies' & GENT'S WATCHES FREE

Ladies' and gent's size, hunting [illegible] Free to anyone selling our jewelry [illegible] [illegible] model guaranteed watch [illegible] fancy bezel [illegible] Also [illegible] chain (ladies or gent's style).

HOME [illegible] CO., Dept. 16, CHICAGO, ILL.



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To advertise our High-Grade Razors, we will give one razor free of charge to one person in each locality. The razor does not cost you a cent. You have nothing to sell, no work to do for us. It is sent absolutely free and postpaid on most liberal offer ever made. Send two cent stamp. Bell Razor Co., 103, Geneva, N. Y.

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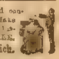

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CATARRH Hawking, Spitting, Accumulation of Mucus, Watery Discharge from Stomach, Spit Up Same, Nose Runs, Sneeze, Bad Odor, Dull Headaches, Catarrhal Deafness, Pains in Kidneys, Bladder, Lungs or Over Entire Body, Scanty Discharges from Bowels? Get Dr. Rainey's Vitality Tablets at once! They remove the cause.

THINNESS Under Weight, Hollow Cheeks, Flat Chest, Scrawny Neck, Dyspepsia, Thin Blood? Dr. Rainey's Vitality Tablets build you up in every way. Guaranteed [illegible] greatly improve your appearance.

NO SECRET FORMULA The days of secret prepa[illegible] of my Vitality Tal[illegible]

DR. RAINEY'S VITALITY

vitality, create nerve

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a

This Bottle Is Absolutely Free! I will never ask you to pay for it. Nor are you under any obligation to buy more tablets. After you have tried this thoroughly, if you are satisfied the medicine is all I claim, I know you will be only too happy to order one but [illegible] health, strength and vigor are completely restored.

"Liberty!" he cried, feeling a thrill in every part of his body. "I guess the old Tory's prison will lose its bird."

He twisted himself from the drain and stood erect beneath the stars. In another moment he was flying across the ground and then down a starlit road. All at once he stopped. A horse was galloping toward him. Tiny Tom leaned breathlessly forward.

"That's Dick!" he exclaimed. "Sure it's Dick o' the Dark."

As the animal came abreast of him the boy bard sprang into the road and caught the bridle rein.

"It's Tom, Dick!" he cried. "I've got news for you. Tomorrow night Colonel Tarleton meets the Tories at Master Silts."

"Good, Tom! At Silt's, eh? Thank you, boy. We'll show this great redcoat a trick or two. Get up behind me, Tom," and the horse went down the road again.

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

* * *

Enthusiasm makes heavy work light.

Scaring a Creditor.

Mr. Laughton is a painter, always in debt, always happy, and always ready to bid defiance to duns and creditors.

One morning, at his studio, his tailor entered.

"I come, sir, to ask you to pay the bill which for several weeks I have tried to collect," said the man, politely, but with the decided tone of one who means to have what he asks for. "I have heard that you received some money, yesterday, and——"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted Laughton, with perfect equanimity, "but if you have made up your mind to preach to me, I may tell you beforehand that however eloquent your sermon may be, it will be impossible for me to pay your bill today."

"Is that your final reply, sir?"

"It is, indeed."

"In that case, I must tell you, with great regret, that I am resolved not to leave here until you have given me the money."

"As you please, sir. Take a seat."

The man sat down, and Laughton, opening the door, calls out to an attendant:

"I am at home to nobody; only I wish you would come in at about six o'clock this evening and take to their addresses the letters you find on my table."

Then he shut the door, put the key in his pocket, sat down to his desk, wrote a number of letters which he sealed with black and then scribbled all over a large sheet of paper headed in large letters: "This is my will."

The tailor watched all his movements, and laughed to himself with that knowing air which seems to say: "He don't get rid of me, whatever he means."

When Laughton had done writing, he opened a large closet, got on a chair, and unwound a long roll or list of various colors. The tailor's curiosity began to be aroused.

"What now?" he thought. "Has he an idea of making me his prisoner, and compelling me to make list shoes?"

Laughton, arming himself with a hammer, began to fasten the doors and windows with a seriousness which resembled sadness. This accomplished, he took a large bronze basin, from which he improvised a chafing dish; he filled it with coal and lit it.

"This is a farce," thought the tailor; but this time he did not laugh.

Laughton went back to his desk, arranged his papers, and wrote these words, which he stuck on the wall: "Accuse nobody of our death."

At that moment, the tailor, who began to sneeze, either from fear or incipient asphyxia, hastily arose and said to Laughton, who was stretched out on an armchair, his eyes already closed:

"Excuse me, sir, I came to collect a bill, not to get suffocated," and he turned toward the door.

"It is too late," said Laughton, placing himself before him and overtopping him with his great height; "our determination is irrevocable."

"Sir, I am suffocating. Let me out either through the door or through the window!" cried the tailor.

Laughton, who had to do all he could to keep from laughing, at last turned the key in the lock, the door was opened, and the bill and the tailor went downstairs four steps at a time, and Laughton has never seen or heard of either of them since.

* * *

Didn't Wait to See.

"Yes," remarked Jenkins, "I gave it to him straight, I can tell you; told him just exactly what I thought of him—and a bit more, perhaps. Bigger than me?" he continued, noting the look of interrogation on Robson's face. "Yes, I should think he was, and he's got a temper like a ——"

"I know he has," said Robson. "And that's what puzzles me. Do you mean to say he didn't try to go for you and hurt you?"

Jenkins shrugged his shoulders.

"Really, I can't tell you," he sighed. "You see, when I'd finished all I had to say I just hung up the telephone receiver and walked away."

WANT ADS.

AGENTS WANTED

SALESMEN Wanted to Place the R & H Postage Stamp Vendor with retail merchants; this machine, mainly through an original coupon plan, earns for the merchant a big profit which returns its cost to him within a month; wherever it has been installed a chorus of praise has gone up; will give you the sole right to introduce this machine in your city; it's a chance for you to clean up big money right off, and thereafter on supplies to draw a monthly commission. No salary grabbers wanted, but live wires. Address R & H Mfg. Co., Hartford, Conn

AGENTS Sell Concentrated Liquor Extracts for making whiskies, liquors and cordials at home. Something new at last. Wanted in every home. Saves over 50%. One taste makes a customer for life. Strictly legitimate—no license required. Big demand, sells fast, coins you money. Send postal today for money making selling plans. Universal Import Co., Dept. 24, Cincinnati, O.

WANTED a Party or Partners in Every county to invest about $500.00 in our outfit which should earn a large income for the operators. Write us for particulars if you have the money or the backing to furnish it. American Well Works, Aurora, Ill.

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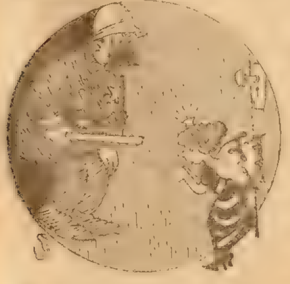
A MODERN FAIRY

By JAMES C. THRELFALL

"HELP! Help!" came in a thin, piping voice from the Ladies' Parlor of the Old Missouri rooming-house Officer Tim McCoul, seated at the grate in the office of the said rooming-house sprang to his feet pricked up his ears, [illegible] his belt a notch, tightened [illegible] on his night-stick, and stepped [illegible] through the swinging doors that connected the two rooms

Tim had stepped inside the office of the rooming-house to escape a half-hour of the rigors of the San Francisco fog and the night clerk had left him in charge while he, the night clerk indulged himself in a drink at the barroom across the way.

McCoul had been in the United States long enough to get a position on the San Francisco police force, but not long



He frowned down at the fairy.

enough to doubt the existence of fairies When he saw, therefore, what in [illegible] mortal would have taken to be an undersized girl-child of seven or eight years of age with the tail of her frock caught in a closet door, he knew at once that it was no girl-child, but as veritable a fairy as ever circled a magic ring in County Clare.

So, when the little being continued to cry "Help! Help!" in her [illegible] voice, Tim carefully bolted the door through which he had just come, to [illegible] possible interruption, and frowned down at the fairy, and in the sternest voice he could muster said, coarsely, [illegible] there in it?"

"Help! Help!" she wailed [illegible] me help a poor child to free herself, and home to her mother?"

"Come now," said Tim [illegible] some with your [illegible] but here's one you won't [illegible] you loose from this [illegible] what do I get out of it?

The fairy saw by this that Tim [illegible] recognized her quality, and that he meant business. She offered to guarantee any wish he might making during the approaching day. Tim shook his head

She offered to guarantee him any [illegible] wishes he might make during the approaching day. Tim again shook his head

Of course she raised the bonus to three wishes and since Tim didn't like to be [illegible] and since three wishes seems to be the union scale for releasing fairies in distress, he accepted the offer and freed her, she flying happily away through the open window.

You may be sure that Tim didn't tarry about the police station that morning after reporting from his shift. Neither did his wife and three children sleep long after he arrived at hom

"Three wishes, woman," he kept shouting, until the wife was as wide awake as he. "We have three wishes from the fairy, woman, and our fortune is made for life."

"We must wish for a fine home," she said, as soon as she had heard his story.

"To be sure," said Tim

"And a nice automobile."

"And a nice garage," said Tim

"And a swell driveway," said she.

"And a nice sum of money in the bank," he added in turn.

"And a whole wardrobe of new clothes," said the wife

"But that would make six wishes, already," Tim objected. "Why waste so many wishes on things that gold would buy when we could wish for the gold all in a lump"

"True enough," admitted Mrs McCoul.

"I have the idea," said Tim, "we will first wish for the automobile Then we can [illegible] the houses [illegible] When we have [illegible] house that suits us exactly [illegible] for one like it."

"And [illegible] get the inside fix- [illegible] wife

[illegible] get the idea, ex- [illegible]

[illegible] the house, Tim [illegible] of it full of gold"

[illegible] of penetration. [illegible]

[illegible] children ready and [illegible] for the automobile, [illegible] around among the higher-ups until we have found the house [illegible]

"It [illegible] rooms for the children [illegible] said Tim.

"[illegible]" said the wife

"[illegible]," said the wife

"[illegible]" insisted Tim

"And a rosebush climbing up the porch," said the wife

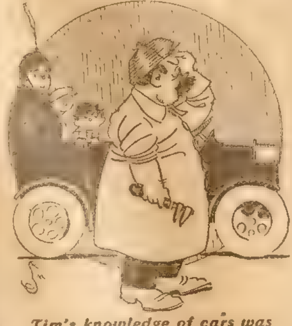
"Woman you can raise rosebushes any time," said Tim. "But get the children ready."

And the children were forthwith gotten ready. They were not so awfully well gone over, to be sure; the wife was too excited to be much of a stickler for detail, and the children were too excited to stay in one place long enough to be "dolled up," but their hair was plastered down, and the greater part of the dirt washed from their faces, and their clothes pretty well buttoned up the back and front.

When they made their way down the steps of the apartment, there was Tim in the street. He had used his first wish, and it quite took the breath of the family to see him sitting back in the deep cushions of a long low car of the very latest model

Tim gave them a blast of greeting from the electric horn, and threw the doors grandly open so that the little band might enter.

Nothing half so grand had ever been seen in Tim's neighborhood He was



Tim's knowledge of cars was limited.

sorry that none of his acquaintances were on their stoops to envy him his acquisition until he reflected that observation would lead to enforced explanation, and explanations would take time, and they needed all the time that lay before them that day. They had but ten hours to make their selection, for with the setting of the sun the spell of the fairy would be over

The day was clear, with just enough of crispness in the air to make their pulses beat high. Tim's knowledge of auto-mechanism was limited, but the car answered every touch of his hand on the lever, and a child might have operated it. Over the rough places they glided, with never a hairbreadth of jolt to get past the voluminous springs of the car. Up the steep grades they went, and you would never have known but they were on the levelest roads by the actions of the machine. Oh, but life was a grand thing in such a car!

They wasted but little time in the commoner part of the city Within a half-hour they were threading the more aristocratic boulevards, pausing from time to time to consider the beauties of this sort of a chimney, or that sort of a roof, or some other sort of an entrance.

What suited Tim didn't suit his wife. One especially fine home was passed by because it had too many gewgaws on it to suit the man, and another one was resigned because it was plainer than the wife liked, and another one they had about agreed on, when they discovered there wasn't enough room for the children and such company as they might expect to entertain

Not that they quarreled. They were perfectly lovely to each other. Each wanted the other to be satisfied, and so they started and stopped, and stopped and started.

They didn't have time to examine the inner workings of any of the houses, even if they would have been [illegible] welcomed by the inmates [illegible] were prepared to be satisfied with the insides if only the outsides were satisfactory

Any one who has ever hunted for apartments can form an idea of the magnitude of the proposition Tim and his wife had to consider. A whole cityful of houses to pick from, in which to spend the rest of their lives

They gradually worked through the more centrally located homes and out into the suburban district [illegible] houses increased [illegible] farther out they went, and made the decision so much the harder

Since Tim and his wife would be rich, there was no special need to pick a house near the city, and when they saw the large grounds of the country places, they were glad they had postponed their choice so long

It was getting pretty late in the afternoon when they came to a mansion sitting up on a little hill which just fitted their [illegible] tions. They [illegible] the private road and [illegible] from every part of the compass, and

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I am trying to convince sufferers from these diseases that I have something far better than the usual run of remedies, treatments and such things, and the only way I can demonstrate that fact is to go to the expense of compounding the medicine and sending it out free of charge. This I [illegible] for any sufferer who will take the [illegible] Understand, I [illegible] send you a valueless "sample, proof or test treatment, nor will I send you a package of medicine and say that you can use some of it and pay for the rest, but I will send you a supply free of charge and you will not be asked to pay for this gift nor will you be under any obligations.

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A natural question—the reason is also a natural one—**Previous Lack of Railroad Transportation.**' We NOW **have a** railroad—The Missouri Southern Railroad—runs right through the 76,000 Acres and about 70% of same lies from adjoining to within 3½ miles of the Railroad. So now the next step is to get the people. No doubt you remember when a few years ago the Northern Pacific (from a **portion** of their **extensive holdings**) gave away one 160 Acre Tract out of every 640 Acres, as an **inducement** to **settle up** the country. Railroads on account of having **a money - making - after - consideration - in-view** can **easily do** what **private** companies cannot **afford to do,** therefore, to accomplish our purpose, **a portion** of our **Extensive Holdings** is being included in this **most remarkable, unusual** and **liberal** Land Opening, the like of which we feel quite positive will never again be equaled in the HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY, the disposing of which will, of course **very naturally** increase the value of the remaining Acreage to many times what it would have been worth without this Opening and the Settlers. Then, BESIDES, there's our NEW Townsite of FRUIT CITY which we have recently **"Laid Out,"** located on the Missouri Southern Railroad adjoining the big 3,000 Acre Orchard. There will be 5,000 Business and Residence Lots in Fruit City, but NONE of the Lots will be **included** in this Opening. Fruit City has a great future. There is no doubt in our minds at all but what it will reach the 5,000 mark in less than twenty-four months after the Opening. **A FULL BLOCK** upon which **to erect** the **Court House** will be set aside; and since five-sixths of the people NOW in the County live along the railroad, we should experience but very little difficulty, if any, in moving the County Seat to Fruit City when the time comes to vote, as the County Seat is at present located at a **little inland village eight miles from the railroad with a population of 300.** Well then, what does all this mean to Fruit City? It should mean a thriving, prosperous and substantial City of several thousand within a very short time after the Opening and at least a HALF MILLION DOLLARS NET to our Association from the Sale of the 5,000 **Lots.** Not a **LOT** will be offered for **Sale** in this anticipated future Metropolis until **ON** and **AFTER** the **OPENING DAY.**

"These" Circumstances Make Possible "Your" Opportunity

This 76,000 Acre Tract is to be divided into 5,000 Farms as follows: 3,600, 10-Acre Farms; 1,200, 20-Acre Farms; 100, 40-Acre Farms; 50, 80-Acre Farms; and 50, 160-Acre Farms. It does not follow, however, that the first 5,000 Registrants will secure the 5,000 Farms. This Opening will be conducted in a manner somewhat unlike the method which has prevailed at Government Land Openings, the important difference being as follows: When the Government conducts a Land Opening, the **NAME of each Registrant (regardless of the NUMBER of Registrants) is included** in the Opening, consequently there are **always considerably more** Registrants than there are **Farms** to be **distributed.** To guard against disappointments of this nature, we have made the following provisions: The Opening will include, besides the 5,000 separate Farms, a 3,000-Acre Orchard, consisting of 2,500 Acres of Apples, 300 Acres of Peaches and 200 Acres of Grapes. Now being **Developed, Improved** and **Equipped,** at an expense of about **Four Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars.** It will be one of the **largest,** and **most highly developed** and **finest** equipped Orchards in the world. It is being equipped with 40 Tenement Houses; 1 Winery, including all necessary Presses, Tuns, Cellars and Buildings; 1 Complete Vinegar Plant, including all up-to-date Equipment, Electrical and otherwise; 1 Complete Cider Mill Plant, including Storage Tanks and all up-to-date Equipment, Electrical and otherwise; 1 Complete Canning Factory and Buildings, including all up-to-date Equipment, Electrical and otherwise; 2 Evaporating Houses; 2 Fruit Packing Sheds; 40 Fruit Spraying Outfits; 1 Large Cold Storage Plant; 1 Large Cool Storage Warehouse; 1 large Hotel; 5 Large Barns; 100 Head of Mules and Harness; 50 Farm Wagons; 50 Turning Plows; 50 Cultivators; 50 Double Shovels; 50 No. "A" Harrows and a number of Sprouting Hooks, Pruning Knives, Saws, Axes and a lot of other miscellaneous Equipment sufficient to **thoroughly equip** an Orchard of this magnitude.

Now every person whose **Registration** is **accepted** for this Land Opening will secure either **a Farm** or **100 Shares of Orchard Stock** but no Registration will be accepted unless the Registrant pays the **small Registration Fee** of $15; this entitles him to **one Contract** and **a Full-Paid-Up Certificate** and **he will be sure to receive** at the Opening (without having to pay us **any more** than the $15) **one** of the 5,000 Tracts of Land or **100** Shares of Stock in the 3,000-Acre Orchard.

Remember, that the **Abstracts** are **held in** Trust by the **OLD COLONY TRUST & SAVINGS BANK,** of Chicago, Ill., and that they **CERTIFY** every **Full-Paid-Up Certificate** that goes out to each Registrant. The **Deed** and **Abstracts** will be turned over by the **BANK** on Day of Opening and will show the 76,000 Acres **FREE** of **ALL** incumbrance.

You will be given **a Warranty Deed** and **Abstract to the Land,** which means that you will be the **sole** and **undisputed** possessor of that particular Tract of Land. No additional **cost will be made** for the **preparation** of **Deed** and **Abstract.** Moreover, while we are very anxious to have everyone who gets a Farm move on to it, you are under no obligations to do so. You don't have to live on it, improve it, or do anything with it unless you want to. If you get 100 Shares of Orchard Stock **there will be no further assessments, because the Stock is Fully Paid and Non-Assessable.** You will simply own 100 Shares of Stock in what promises to be the **most complete, best equipped and biggest paying Fruit and Orchard Enterprise** this country has ever seen. However, each Unit included in the Opening will be of as nearly equal value as humanly possible.

Opening To Be At Fruit City—You Don't Have To Attend

The **Opening** will be held at Fruit City and will occur as soon after the **closing** of Registrations as arrangements can be made. The date of same will be announced at least 30 days in advance, and **Plots** of the **Land** and **Orchard** will be mailed to **each accepted Registrant.** From the way **Registrations** are now coming in the **DATE** of the Opening **cannot be far distant. You do not have to be on the ground on Opening Day or send anyone to represent you unless you want to,** for there will not be the **slightest favoritism** shown to anyone. **ALL, rich** and **poor alike,** have an **equal** opportunity. You will immediately after the Opening, be notified as to just what Tract or Interest you have secured, but you **NOW KNOW** in **advance** that it will be **either a** 160, 80, 40, 20 or 10-Acre Farm, or 100 Shares of Orchard Stock—No blanks—No disappointments.

You Can Register By Mail Now And Get Your Money Back Any Time Within 30 Days If After Fuller Investigation You Wish To Withdraw.

It can be very safely predicted, comparing this Land Opening with those of the past, that there will be **far more Registrations** than there will be Contracts for, therefore, we would advise that you send in your **Registration NOW,** if you are Eligible, or else you are **liable to be TOO LATE,** for there will be but **ONE** Registration **accepted for each** Contract included in the Opening and **no more,** and the **BANK** will **Certify** only **ONE** Full-Paid-Up Certificate for each Contract included in the Opening and **no more.** This being the case, and **Registrations** now being received by the hundreds, it will **behoove you to** reach our **Committee** with your Registration before the Contracts are **all gone—When all have been spoken for there will be no more available,** consequently we shall be forced to **REJECT all EXCESS Registrations and return the Registrant's Money.** You can pay the $15.00 all in cash or at the rate of $3.00 per month. There is only one way for you to make sure that your **Registration** will reach us in time and that is by sending in your **Remittance** (either the **entire** $15 or the **first installment** of $3) **at once.** We will then send you **full descriptive literature** explaining the **"Big Opening"** in detail and you can take your **own time to investigate.** If after **a thorough investigation** you desire to **forfeit** your **Contract,** all you need to do, is to notify us to that effect any time within 30 days after sending in your Remittance and **we will promptly refund every penny of the money sent us.**

Make your **Remittance direct** to The Railroads Unimproved Land Association, In Care Of **Registration Committee,** using the **Registration Coupon to your LEFT** for that purpose. All Remittances will be **duly acknowledged** and **Receipts** covering same **promptly mailed** as **outlined** and **GUARANTEED** in our **Registration Coupon.**

Respectfully,

The Railroads Unimproved Land Assn.,
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

REGISTRATION COUPON

Act Now! Registrations Accepted by Mail. The Following Are Eligible and Can Register.

1. Any Man or Woman (married or single) over 21 years of age, who does not now own over 40 Acres of Land.
2. Any Widow, regardless of age, who does not now own over 40 Acres of Land.
3. Any Orphan, over 15 years of age, who does not now own over 40 Acres of Land.

The Railroads Unimproved Land Association
In Care Of Registration Committee
14th Floor, Great Northern Building, Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:—I find from your **Classifications** that I am **Eligible** to Register in your **"Big Land Opening,"** therefore you will find herewith enclosed this **Registration Coupon** properly filled out, accompanied by a Remittance of $............ If my Registration is accepted please send me a **Receipt** covering the amount of my **Remittance,** which will **guarantee** that immediately upon the payment of my Registration Fee of $15.00 in full, I will be entitled to **One Contract** and will **RECEIVE a Full-Paid-Up Certificate, Certified** by the Old Colony Trust & Savings Bank, of Chicago, Illinois. The said **Full-Paid-Up Certificate** is to and will further **guarantee that I will not be required to pay you one penny more** than my Registration Fee of $15.00 either **before** or **after** the Opening—and that **I WILL BE SURE TO RECEIVE** at the Opening—without having to pay you **one penny more** than the $15.00, either a 10, 20, 40, 80 or 160 Acre Tract of Land, out of the described 76,000 Acres, or 100 Shares of Fully Paid and Non-Assessable Orchard Stock, in the described 3000 Acre Orchard—and that the **FIFTEEN DOLLARS ALSO INCLUDES** the **preparing** of the **Deed** and **Abstract,** if I get a Tract of **Land,** or the **Preparing** of the **Stock Certificate,** if I get **100 Shares of Stock.**

It is further understood and agreed, that if after a thorough investigation of this Proposition, it does not appeal to me as being desirable, or if for **any reason** I wish to withdraw my Registration, I have the privilege of notifying you to that effect any time within 30 days after date of mailing this Registration Coupon and **you will promptly refund the full amount I have remitted.** It is further agreed that in the event my **Registration** is **Rejected, you will immediately refund the full amount I have remitted.**

Name ... City ....

State . .. . . Street or R F D No . . . .

Age........Married or Single....................Widow or Orphan . . ..

Occupation . . .. Nationality .. . .

Do you own over 40 Acres of Land?........................ .(WRITE PLAINLY)

Have you, to the best of your knowledge, truthfully answered all the above questions?

Note:—This Registration Coupon will not be **RECOGNIZED** unless all the above questions are properly filled in. Every person who is **Eligible** can **Register ONCE,** but **ONLY ONCE** and **NO MORE.**

Tim was just ready to pronounce the magic formula which would duplicate its grandeurs for themselves, when over on the next hill the wife espied another mansion which looked just a wee bit better.

"Let's go over and look at it, Tim," she said. "If we don't like it so well we can come back to this one."

"Very well," said Tim, and away they rolled

There was a nice stretch of road between the two, with a slight grade in it, but not enough to tax the capacity of the machine in any way. When they were a stone's throw from the object of their quest, however, some of the mechanism in the lower part of the car squeaked dismally, and she came to a full stop.

It was the first difficulty of the day. As we said before, Tim's knowledge of cars was limited, but out he stepped, and under the car he crawled, screw-driver and monkey-wrench in hand. There were plenty of nuts and bolts to twist on, and he poked and jabbed and twisted for a few minutes, and then returned to the seat and tried to start the car.

Nothing doing!

Under he went again. Still no response to his efforts when he returned to the seat.

"Oh, do hurry up, Tim," cried the wife. "The sun is almost down."

"I think I'll have it in a jiffy," said Tim, and under he dived for the third time.

It was a half-hour before he crawled out and took his place at the steering wheel and gave the throttle a yank. Truth to tell, he was getting mad.

The electric starter buzzed beautifully, but when he turned on his power there was a rasping grind, but no locomotion. The car simply would not budge.

"Oh, Tim, you must hurry," said his wife.

Tim let his temper get the best of him.

"I wish the car was in h—!" he said.

There was what seemed to Tim and his wife to be a flash of lightning, followed by a clap of thunder, a sinking sensation, and then darkness, impenetrable darkness. Darkness and heat. Lord, but it was hot! The children screamed and the wife screamed, and became as irresponsible as they.

Tim was dreadfully frightened, as who would not have been, but he kept his head sufficiently to turn on the electric light. They were in a long, narrow cavern. The powerful lamp failed to show the end of the cavern, which stretched straight away in front of them, but the walls were within touch.

Tim reached out his hand to the wall nearest him. The flesh of his fingertips sizzled before he could tear the hand away. He dared not get out where the surroundings were as hot as that.

He held his watch in the rays of the lamp. At six o'clock the sun would set and the fairy spell would be over, and it lacked but fifteen minutes of that time! If they were not outside in a very short meter, the cavern would perforce be their abiding-place, for nobody could tell how long. If this was part of the region that it seemed to be, they could be prayed out in time, but while Tim was a good Catholic, he realized that praying was a slow process.

He turned to make some such remark to his wife, but she was too far gone to answer.

Fortunately there was one way to get out. Tim had one perfectly good wish "coming."

"I wish we were at home," he said, as soon as he remembered.

There was another flash of lightning, followed by a clap of thunder, and they stood in front of their apartments. But since Tim had failed to include the car in his wish, it came not with them, but remains motionless in its cavern to this day, unless some impish citizen thereabouts, with a knowledge of motor-cars, has found it and annexed it to his own use.

All that Tim had to show for his three wonderful wishes, when he dragged his weary bones back to the police station that night for duty, was a burnt hand and a thorough curing of the habit of profanity.

* * *

Getting Even.

A commercial traveler relates that he was in a postoffice up York State when a man came in and bought a half-dollar's worth of stamps. The clerk at the window, as he handed them out, asked:

"Don't you want to send something by parcel post?"

"Not today."

"Have a money order this morning?"

"No, thanks."

"Or some postal cards? A new supply just came in."

"None today."

"Stamped envelopes? We carry all sizes."

"No, no!"

"Want to rent a postoffice box or register a package?"

"Not at all." And the customer left.

The traveling man inquired, "Who is that fellow?"

"Oh, he's a barber," replied the clerk. "Did you hear me get square?"

* * *

Her Composition.

"Is that servant of yours made of iron?"

"No; maid of all work."

Guaranteed Everbearing Strawberries

40 ACRES solid to Superb, Progressive, Americus and other best everbearers. Get acquainted offer for testing. Send us 10c for mailing expense, and we will send you 6 high quality everbearing plants (worth $1) and guarantee them to fruit all summer and fall, or money refunded. Catalogue with history **FREE** if you write today.
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Trees—Plants—Vines
in small or large lots at wholesale prices. Catalog and Green's Fruit Book—FREE. Green's Nursery Co.
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Free Send for Jim Rohan's new book of money making "Hatching Facts." Thousands of 100% perfect hatches made with Eight Times World's Champion Belle City Hatching Outfit 276,000 in use. Personal money back guaranty. My low price will surprise you. Jim Rohan, Pres.
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A high grade hatcher, direct from factory to user. Has red wood case, triple walls, asbestos lined, copper hot water tank, self regulator, nursery, high legs, safety lamp, etc. Safe, simple and sure. All set up ready for use. Money back guarantee. 18 years experience. Brooders for 120 chicks $2.50. For 240 chicks $4.00 and up. Write for big free catalogue.
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Raise a greater percentage of chicks this year employing nature's way. Feathers retain and distribute heat in a manner which cannot be accomplished by any other means. Feathers never die—They live like hair—retaining life means retaining body heat—that's what the chicks need—that's what they get when hovering under the natural feathers in a Simplex-Perfection Feather brooder or hover. Ask for catalog E18. Prices from $4.00 to $10.00. Sizes 50 to 150 chicks. SIMPLEX SUPPLY HOUSE, Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

PFILE'S 65 Varieties
LAND and Water Fowls. Farm-raised stock, with eggs in season. Send 2c for my valuable illustrated descriptive Poultry Book for 1914. Write Henry Pfile, Box 663, Freeport, Ill.

Latest Book "Profitable Poultry," 128 pages practical facts, 180 beautiful pictures. Latest improved methods to raise poultry. All about world's famous Runner Ducks, 52 other varieties pure-bred poultry. This Book, lowest prices, fowls, eggs, incubators, etc., only 5c
BERRY'S POULTRY FARM, Box 68, CLARINDA, IOWA

62 Varieties Pure bred Chickens, Ducks, Geese and Turkeys. Northern raised, hardy and fine plumage. Prize winners at the world's largest shows. Lowest prices on stocks and eggs, incubators, brooders and poultry supplies. Large Ills. Catalog for 4c.
C. M. ATWOOD, Box 58 Dundee, Minn.

Money Making Poultry
Our specialty. Leading varieties pure bred chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese. Prize winners. Best stock and eggs. Lowest prices; oldest farm; 29th year. Fine catalog FREE. H. M. JONES CO., Box 54 Des Moines, Iowa.

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Revealed. YOU may do it! Any boy or man may learn at home. Small cost. Mystify your friends and make yourself popular. Make fun and money. Illustrated Treatise and full particulars Free. Write today.
THE BETTS CO., Sta. 10, Jackson, Mich.

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Stem Wind & Set
For selling thimbles and needles. We positively give a genuine American Stem Wind and Set Watch, beautifully designed case, warranted time-keeper, 6-Year guarantee, Sparkling Set or Plain Ring, all for selling 20 Silver-Aluminum Thimbles at 10c each. Paper of Gold-Eye Needles Free with each Thimble. Easy to sell. Write for them. When sold return the $2 and we will send the watch and ring. Ladies' or Gents' style Chain.
HOME SUPPLY CO., Dept. 225 Chicago, Ill.

FREE TO MOTHERS!
Avoid the trouble of drying your children's bed clothes each morning by giving them **ZEMETO.**
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ST. VITUS' DANCE Sure Cure. Circular. Dr. Fenner, Fredonia, N. Y.

RUPTURE CURED
by STUART'S PLAPAO-PADS means that you can throw away the painful truss altogether, as they are made to cure rupture and not simply to hold it; being made self-adhesive to prevent slipping, they have, therefore, also proven to be an important adjunct in retaining rupture that cannot be held by a truss.

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THE INNER SURFACE IS MADE ADHESIVE TO SECURE THE PLAPAO-PAD FIRMLY TO THE BODY, WHICH KEEPS THE PLAPAO CONTINUALLY APPLIED AND PAD FROM SHIFTING
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NO STRAPS, BUCKLES OR SPRINGS ATTACHED, cannot slip, so cannot chafe or press against the pubic bone. Thousands have treated themselves in the privacy of the home—most obstinate cases reported cured—no delay from work. Soft as velvet—easy to apply—inexpensive. Process of recovery is natural, so afterwards no use for trusses. Awarded Gold Medal International Exposition, Rome; Grand Prix at Paris. Write us today to prove it by sending TRIAL PLAPAO FREE. Address, PLAPAO LABORATORIES, Block 1824 St. Louis, Mo.

The Biting Sword.

(Continued from page three.)

We made the detour according to my idea, but as we were passing the point where Vanderwinder's road forked I was seized with a mighty craving to know just what we would have encountered had we held our road, since it promised a line on what to do next.

I spoke to Hugh and bade him go on foot and look well. He went, and was soon back.

"Well?" I questioned.

"'Tis well we bore away, master," he returned. "Three horsemen tarry at the fork."

"Openly?"

"Nay, they are under the great trees there, but in saddle and so arranged that they could dash out at once, and their concealment is fair enough to hide them from other riders who might come as we nearly did."

"Truly," cried Mademoiselle, "the excellent caution of our leader has saved us a harsh encounter."

I made some suitable answer, but as we jogged forward my mind was not open to them. This venture of ours had a very serious look to it now, a darkly threatening cast.

Our road was thickly blocked by enemies, and I could no longer doubt that they had known our intentions before we left New York. They had their men out, prepared to meet and baffle us, and few important adventures of that day were limited to bafflement. If we fell into their hands, it was certain that Hugh and I would be given over to the sword, if they could do the trick—for those were rough days in that section.

It was my task to take Mademoiselle safely to New Haven, and the road was littered with foes. Then and there I resolved that if the foe came upon us they would deviate far from the regular paths. Abandoning the usual way, I planned to ride north fast and far, hoping thereby to confuse and avoid the unknown knaves.

Carrying the detour as far as I thought necessary, I then led the way back to the Vanderwinder road. Beyond, we had passable footing for our beasts, and I sent them at a gallop for some miles, nor did we adopt a moderate pace until the paling of the night warned me that our orders demanded the finding of a covert.

Being on rather familiar ground, I took a side-path and, at the end of another mile, passing the ruined house where old Pieter Merzger had met his death at the hands of the Indians he traded with a few years before, I pressed on until we came to the grove of trees celebrated as the council place of former days, but now avoided as so-called haunted ground. Here I called a halt, and we slid from our saddles.

"Hugh," I said briskly, "open your packs and bring out the food. No fire can be made, but I doubt not that ample provision has been made for our bodily wants. Mademoiselle, I think we are safe for the day."

"I trust so, Master Stelland, and know you that I fully approve of your caution. Better be safe in this wood than sorry on New Haven road."

"We are far from that road, Mademoiselle."

"I know, I know—and it is thanks to you."

"Your commendation gives me rare satisfaction," I replied, bowing.

"Yet," and she fell pensive, "I am so puzzled, so very much bewildered. Why this fierce campaign against us?"

"Do you not know why?"

"I know certain things, of course, but not why poor, insignificant I am so hunted."

I nodded absently, thinking that if she were also in the dark we were babes in the wood, animated only by one purpose—to get to our final destination.

Hugh interrupted me with a strange cry. He had opened and partly uncovered the contents of the packs, but, as it proved, had come upon something far from being mere food. Aroused by his exclamation I looked, and I declare that what I saw dumfounded me—ay, and greatly startled me.

The pack had disgorged more trouble.

This highly interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

The Star Lioness.

The lioness was about the most frightened of the lot. And that is saying a great deal, for the people in the audience were Parisians, and Parisians like to be frightened. But the fright would have gripped any nation. You see, the lioness was on the wrong side of the bars. According to her own estimation, she was on the right side of the bars, because she doesn't care about being cooped up all the time. She is an actress, and she knows that people like to look at her. So it is natural that she should want to get out on the streets of Paris and be observed.

She didn't get out on the streets of Paris. She didn't even get out of the Parisian theater where she was one of the chief attractions. But she did get out of her cage. Then the people got out of the theater.

You see, the hero was getting into trouble and the villain had let loose the menagerie on him, or the villain was getting his just deserts and was about to be torn to pieces by wild beasts. The play was a melodrama. Is it necessary to say so? Well, everything was going along all right, but somehow the lioness, who was to represent the den of wild beasts and do the tearing to pieces, didn't go through the right door. So she found herself blinking into the footlights, beyond which arose screams and shrieks and cries, and yells. The audience had been ready enough to see the hero be saved or to witness the villain get killed, but they did not really care about making the personal acquaintance of the lady. They thought they had seen enough of the play and started out.

Now, the lioness is a timid creature, and she was just about frightened to death by the noise. She slouched backward to get away from the sound and the light, but some intelligent stagehand had lowered the steel curtain of the theater so that the way out was closed. Thereupon the lioness became more frightened than ever and made a jump over the heads of the orchestra and landed in a box.

There was nobody in the box to show the lioness to the stage entrance, beyond which her own cage and home were kept, and so she started exploring down the corridor. She kept away from the auditorium, because that was where the noise came from. She went straight down the corridor and through a door, which a watchful man closed behind her, and there she was in the manager's office. But the manager wasn't there. Not he. Nobody was there except the lady lion, and so she cuddled down into a corner and went to sleep while the rumpus raged outside.

It was some time before the animal keepers came up and conducted the star of the play back to her own iron bars. When she was safely locked in, the audience straggled back and picked its personal property out of the lot of hats and coats and muffs and things that littered the floor. And then they went home to tell the family about it, and quiet settled down over Paris.

* * *

A Lucky Hunt.

A city woman who recently passed a few days at a farm bought some poultry from the farmer with a view to providing fresh eggs for breakfast every morning. She sent them to town by messenger, at the same time dispatching a note to her husband, telling him to look out for the consignment. Her husband, on reaching his home that night, asked if the poultry had arrived. He was informed that it had, but, explained the servant, he had carelessly left the basement door open and all the chickens had escaped. A fowl hunt was immediately organized. The next day, the husband meeting his wife on her return, exclaimed: "A nice time I had with your poultry. I spent three hours hunting, and only found ten."

"You may consider yourself lucky, then," replied his wife, "for I bought only six."

* * *

Unjust Criticism.

A storm was brewing in Bill Jones' backyard.

"It's too much of a good thing, Liz," he yelled. "I've told yer before I won't have the kids bringin' the coal from the shed in my best hat! Wat 'u'd you say, I'd like ter know?"

With arms akimbo, his better half sauntered into the cabbage patch.

"Looke here, Bill," she said coldly, "stop chinning a minit. You've spoilt the shape of that there hat a'ready with yer funny head; and, as yer handle coal all day long at the wharf, what does that little extra bit of dust in yer hat matter? Yer wants somethin' ter talk about!"

"'Tain't really the dust I object to. But I wears that hat of evenin's," responded the infuriated one, "and if I takes it off me head when I'm out, it leaves a black band around me for'ead. And, of course, I gets accused o' washing me face with me hat on."

Tells why chicks die
J. C. Reefer, the poultry expert of 1535 Main St., Kansas City, Mo., is giving away free a valuable book entitled "White Diarrhoea and How to Cure It." This book contains scientific facts on white diarrhoea and tells how to prepare a simple home solution that cures this terrible disease over night and actually raises 98 per cent of every batch. All poultry raisers should write Mr. Reefer for one of these valuable FREE books.

THIS "VELOUR" HAT FREE
This rich imported "Velour" Hat with the Austrian Maker's name stamped on the inside, made from the very finest hare fur, brushed to the soft glossiness of rich plush, extra heavy, pure grosgrain silk band, fashionable three-quarter bow. Russia Leather sweat band, extra wide, lined with heavy pure silk, of shimmering colors, absolutely the *newest and latest creation* and *so swell* that it will be noticed and admired by everybody. *Regularly sold* in City Stores for $7.00. WE GIVE IT
ABSOLUTELY FREE TO OUR AGENTS
All that we require is that you show our samples and take a few orders for our special made-to-measure clothes. *We pay highest cash profits* and give extra presents besides. *Your choice* of 628 valuable premiums—such as Leather Suit cases, Musical Instruments, Pipes, Watches, Sporting Goods, Guns, etc. *Write for elegant free outfit and full particulars.*
SPENCER MEAD COMPANY, DEPT. 839, CHICAGO

STEEL Shingles Underpriced
On Steel Shingles, we underprice everybody. We sell direct from factory to user. And our enormous business permits a very low profit per sale. We pay the freight and guarantee safe, prompt delivery.
Edwards Steel Shingles can't rot or burn. And the Edwards Tightcote Process and Patented Interlocking Device positively prevent *rust*. Outwear best wood shingles, cost less and are easier put on. Send Postal for latest Prices and see for yourself what you'll save. Give dimension of roof if you can. If not, send the Coupon below. Write today and you'll hear by return mail. Ask for Book 2352

This Brings Big Offer
THE EDWARDS MFG. CO.
2302-2352 Lock Street, Cincinnati, Ohio
Please send Book on your Steel Shingles, together with latest Freight-Paid prices.
Name ....
Address ....

Makes Nerves Tingle With New Vitality
Kellogg's Sanitone Wafers Fill Your Mind With Joy and Cheerfulness and Vitalize New Vim and Vigor Into Your Body.

50-Cent Box Free To Men and Women
Get nerves like steel; be clear-brained, strong and vigorous. Kellogg's Sanitone Wafers invigorate and vitalize as does nothing else. If you are nerve-racked, weary and peevish, and your friends begin to think you're a "dead one,"

Kellogg's Sanitone Wafers Make You Act Like a Boy. You Feel Just Like Jumping Over a Fence.

this marvelous and dependable remedy will give you a new lease on life. Kellogg's Sanitone Wafers are something new and different from any and all other remedies. They make old folks feel young and ambitious, and are good for both men and women.
If you are overworked, run down and careworn —have no spunk for anything at all, these amazing little wafers will thrill you with the health and vim that bring the real joy of living.
Send coupon below today for a free 50c trial box of Kellogg's Sanitone Wafers, to F. J. Kellogg Co., 2629 Hoffmaster Block, Battle Creek, Michigan.
The regular $1.00 size of Kellogg's Sanitone Wafers is for sale at druggists'.

FREE 50c BOX COUPON
F. J. KELLOGG CO.,
2629 Hoffmaster Block,
Battle Creek, Mich.
Send me by return mail, free of charge, a 50c trial box of the wonderful discovery for nerves, Kellogg's Sanitone Wafers. I enclose 6 cents in stamps to help pay postage and packing.
Name ....
Street R.F.D. ....
City .... State ....

Mount Vernon, February 22, 1785

The Success of a Nation depends upon the Health of her People

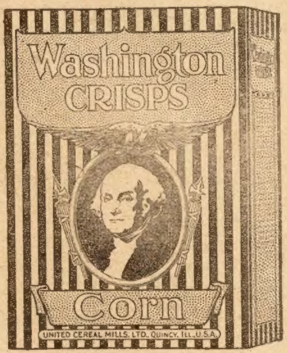
The economical food that makes for sturdiness and health must rank first in the benefits to the country

Washington CRISPS

Delicious Toasted Corn Flakes

Washington Crisps is made from America's greatest cereal—Corn. It was this cereal, Indian Corn, which saved the settlers from starvation during their first winter at Plymouth.

Had it not been for this healthful, nourishing American cereal, the brave little band of pioneers would have fallen victims to the grim specter, Famine, and the history of this country might never have been written.


Washington
CRISPS
Corn
UNITED CEREAL MILLS, LTD. QUINCY, ILL. U.S.A.

Washington Crisps is thoroughly steam-cooked, toasted delicately crisp, and is ready to serve.

Made from the hearts of the strength-giving corn, with pure cane sugar and salt added.

It is deliciously appetizing and delightfully satisfying.

Every package bears the unqualified guarantee of the manufacturers.

Washington Crisps is made under the most perfect sanitary conditions possible to create, in mills that are spotlessly clean, and by high-class, skilled workmen.

Washington Crisps, during all the processes of manufacture, from flaking to packing, never touches human hands; everything is done by automatic machinery.

Buy a package of Washington Crisps and enjoy a genuine treat.

"First in the Homes of his Countrymen"

The LEDGER'S EMBROIDERY CORNER.

We call the attention of every woman to the beauty of the patterns displayed from week to week, and wish to impress upon each one the splendid quality of material that makes our offer a great bargain in every case. Every offer is complete. You can finish it up without buying anything extra.

These designs are already stamped on best quality cloth, and every set comes to you complete, exactly as described.

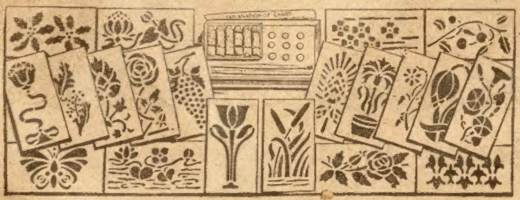
Every one of the designs we are going to offer is new and up-to-date, and nowhere else can you secure the same, as they are made exclusively for us.

You are sure to find many articles that you want if you watch the Ledger each week, and it is so easy to get them, every woman should have little trouble in getting almost every one.

FREE STENCIL OUTFITS.

These fine stencil outfits are the best thing we have ever given the housekeeper. They can be used for painting curtains, pillow tops, table covers, dresser scarfs—walls, portieres, etc. This is the latest idea in decorating the home. No knowledge of painting is required; no drawing or tracing is necessary. Simply press the thumb back through the stencil card and material, and use the colors you like best. Many of these designs will lend themselves to many different patterns and beautiful arrangements.

We are giving these outfits away absolutely free with subscriptions to the Blade and the Ledger.



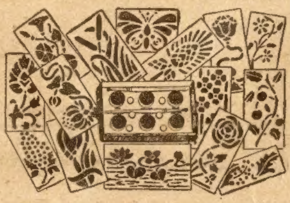
Stencil Outfit A.

OUTFIT A—This outfit consists of twenty cut stencils on oil board; six tubes of assorted "Ideal" oil colors; two stencil brushes; nine thumb tacks; and full directions for stenciling and mixing the various colors to desired shades. You can get this outfit free with a one year $2.00 subscription to the Blade and the Ledger.

OUTFIT B—This outfit is especially suitable for painting on light materials, such as silks, lawns, fine linens, etc. Work can be done very cheaply at home with these outfits that would be very expensive if bought in the stores.

This outfit consists of fifteen cut stencils on oil board; six cups of assorted colors; two brushes; six thumb tacks; and full directions for mixing colors and stenciling.

We will send this outfit absolutely free when we receive $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to the Blade or the Ledger, or a $1.50 renewal subscription to the Blade and the Ledger.



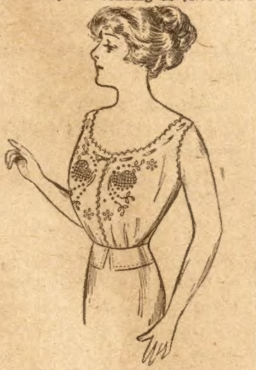
Stencil Outfit B.

There is a big demand for these splendid outfits. Send at once.

W. D. BOYCE CO., 500 N. Dearborn St.,
Chicago, Ill.

NO. 12, CORSET COVER.—A corset cover that every woman will want. Made for French embroidery and punch work, and is stamped on fine quality nainsook, with four skeins of imported cotton for working.

Free to any one sending us $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to either the Blade or the Ledger. You can get the corset cover without the paper by sending fifty cents.



No. 12, Corset Cover.

* * *

The Other Way.

"Donald MacMillan, who is to marry Marie Peary, the 'snow baby,' is an extremely temperate lad. Hence his success as an explorer."

The speaker, a member of the famous Philadelphia Geological Society, smiled and resumed:

"MacMillan has no patience with drink victims—no patience either with them or their excuses. I once heard him say to a tailor who had succumbed:

"'No, no, Jack. He who says misfortune drove him to drink is putting the cart before the horse.'"

CRUEL PILES

Delay Often Means Surgery—Write to-day for Dr. Van Vleck's Remedy which is healing Thousands

SENDS $1 PACKAGE TO TRY FREE

Since Dr. Van Vleck found his Genuine Relief (3-fold Absorption Method) many thousands have already been restored by it to health and comfort.—Why not you? You know the risk of delay. We know what our great 3-fold Absorption Treatment is doing for sufferers all over the globe, then why not sign and mail our coupon NOW? Return mail will bring the Remedy, prepaid, in plain wrapper. Then after testing its merits yourself, if you are satisfied with the benefits received, send us One Dollar. If not, **you pay nothing.** We take your **word.** We could never make this unconditional offer if we hadn't received so many hundreds of glad letters telling us of complete cures of Piles by **Van Vleck's** after all other treatments had failed, even after 30 and 40 years of suffering. We **know** its value, so don't wait, but send the coupon at once.

TRADE MARK REGISTERED

FREE $1 COUPON

Good for $1 Package of Dr. Van Vleck's **Complete 3-Fold Treatment** to be sent **Free on Approval,** as explained above, to

Name ....

Address ....

....

Mail this coupon today to Dr. Van Vleck Co., **RZ9 Majestic Bldg., Jackson, Mich.** Return post will bring the $1 Package on Trial.

"There's Relief in Every Package."

Tailoring Salesmen WANTED

We want live, energetic hustlers, men who can make good; who are ambitious to start in a business of their own. No canvassing; no experience required; no capital necessary. We furnish everything to start. **Hundreds are making from $100 to $200 per month and expenses.** We guarantee absolute satisfaction and take all the risk. We are one of the largest woolen mills in the country and positively have the only up-to-date, high-quality, low-priced tailoring on the market.

A great many of our men are making from $25 to $50 Every Week

We furnish a complete agents' outfit, consisting of **large sample book** (not a folder), **order blanks, tape measures, advertising matter**—in fact everything essential to the conducting of a high-class tailoring business.

Write today for this big outfit It is sent express prepaid. Drop a postal and say *"Send me your agents' outfit."* We will start you at once on the road to Success. Be sure and write today.

DANIEL WOOLEN MILLS, Dept. A, 300 Green St., Chicago

BOYS-Get This Dandy STERLING AIR RIFLE FREE

FOR SPARE MOMENT WORK

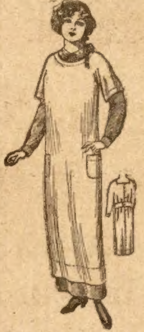
It's a beauty. Just the kind you have always wanted. New model D—with lever action. Strong accurate shooter—for birds, rabbits, rats, etc. Guaranteed to please. And it doesn't cost you a penny to own it. Merely give away free to your friends, 12 beautiful art pictures—one with each box of our quick selling Alton-Mentho-Salve which you sell at 25c a box. That's all. Then send us the $3.00 collected and gun comes by Parcel Post all charges paid. Don't send any money. We trust you. Mentho-Salve and pictures to start you sent free. Merely write name and address and send it now. ALTON MDSE. CO., Dept. 715, 2360 Milwaukee Ave., CHICAGO.

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

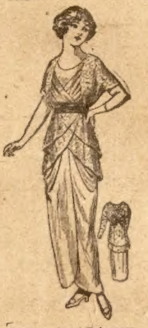
Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

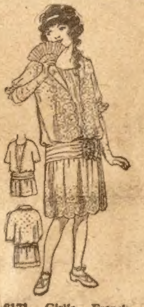
We make a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. **Read our splendid offer below.**



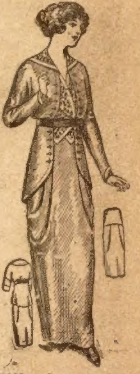
8118 Apron with Kimono Sleeves for Misses and Small Women, 14, 16 and 18 years.



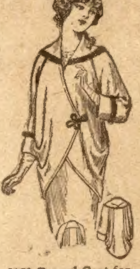
8166 Semi-Princesse Dress for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



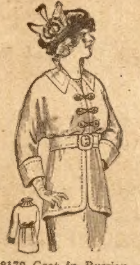
8171 Girl's French Dress, 8 to 14 years.



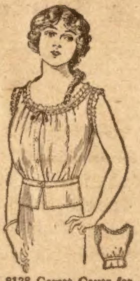
8163 Semi-Princess Gown, 34 to 42 bust.



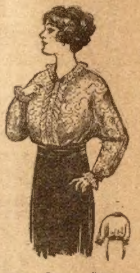
8152 Draped Coat for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



8170 Coat in Russian Style for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



8128 Corset Cover for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



8164 *Fancy* Blouse, 34 to 44 bust.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of The Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc, so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber, send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

.... CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO US ....

THE CHICAGO LEDGER, 500 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Enclosed please find one dollar for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger. This entitles me to Five Pattern Coupons. **Canada Subscription Price $1.50 per year.**

NAME ....

Street No.
or R. F. D. ....

Box.............. Town..............................

This is a.............................. Subscription. State..............................
(New or Renewal).

If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) **GOOD FOR ANY TIME.**

"Mr. Spear hails from Ohio and reigns in Pittsburgh"—*Pittsburgh Gazette-Times*

"I Will Trust You Gladly Whereve You

"I believe in every man who earns a living. I am for the average home lover—th who wants home pleasures but hasn't a whole lot of money to spare all at once. plan of buying is for him. **I want to get acquainted with all those who desire to h homes cheerful and comfortable. I can help them get what they want.** Thousands are 'Spear helped us to beautify our homes on his liberal credit plan.' I want many more like that. Send for my bargain book now and let me explain how I give **'Credit to the Nation.'"**

(Signed) Spear

of Pittsburgh

"Let Spear Make Your Home Sweet Home"

Furniture—Rugs—Curtains—Stoves—Everything for the Home

THIS BOOK FREE
SPEAR & COMPANY
PITTSBURGH PA U.S.A.
CREDIT TO THE NATION
ORDER BLANK
WRITE FOR IT

A Man from Ohio

wrote Spear of Pittsburgh, saying, "I wish you could see my home today. We are plain, working people, but there is not a millionaire living who enjoys greater comforts than we do in our home." That's the kind of thing that shows the value of Spear's credit plan. He helps you to beautify your home without any strain on your pocketbook, without asking unreasonable questions, without letting your neighbors know your business.

Open Your Charge Account

with Spear of Pittsburgh. He will trust you—no matter where you live—and save you money at every turn.

Send for Spear's Big Bargain Book. It is FREE. A post card brings it, or fill out and mail coupon below. It will tell you how to buy any piece of furniture you want, or furnish every room in your home handsomely and completely on the most liberal and easiest charge account credit plan ever devised. No need to scrape and save for months and years. You don't need cash to buy of Spear. By Spear's plan you

Pay As You Can

Pay a little each month. You will find Spear fair and square, his prices lowest. He has no iron-clad rules. Spear knows this country is full of fine men and women who appreciate credit, and he is glad to give it to them. You can use Spear's Credit all you want. He's perfectly willing. Just put him to the test. Spear gives you

30 Days' Home Trial

You can examine and try out, right at home, anything you select. If you don't want to keep the goods you may send them back at Spear's expense, without a quibble. Spear *earns* your friendship and confidence and stands by you. He has thousands of happy, friendly families on his open credit books. It's his life work and Mr. Spear's whole heart is in it. He will help you with his credit plan.

It's The Right Way

to furnish your home right. It is logic and common-sense. This whole United States is run on credit. Successful business men and great factories and railroads keep going on credit. They *buy* on credit. If they couldn't, this Nation would go to smash. Spear's theory is that the credit of all classes of home lovers is good—not the "rich" alone. Spear has trusted thousands of families and has proved his idea right.

A Long Time to Pay

Even if you are comfortably fixed for money, Spear's way is the easiest way to buy. To test it, order any article direct from this advertisement just the same as from Spear's book and if everything is not perfectly satisfactory return it any time in 30 days and Spear will promptly return any money you have paid. When ordering, enclose first payment by Draft, Money Order or Registered Mail.

Spear's Price Challenge!

Spear's enormous volume of business guarantees lowest prices to you in

Furniture
Carpets
Rugs
Portieres
Clocks
Go-Carts
Dishes
Stoves
Ranges
Refrigerators
Silverware
Lace Curtains
Sewing Machines
Washing Machines
Mattresses
Springs, Bedding

You ought to see Spear's Big Catalogue, filled with pictures and full details of Spear's liberal, modern, open account, long-time, easy payment plan—without iron-clad rules—for furnishing your home. Send a post card for it or use coupon below. Tear out coupon now as a reminder.

Get This

Big Book It's Free!

Spear's handsome Free Bargain Catalogue is just like bringing the choicest, biggest, handsomest stock of Home Furnishings—many times the size of even the greatest city store—right *to you.*

Spear guarantees the quality of everything he sells. You take no risk of disappointment, for if you are not pleased with the goods when you receive them you simply send them back at Spear's expense and Spear refunds your first payment at once. Even if you keep the goods 30 days and decide you don't like them, send them back and Spear will return your first payment. How could Spear sell anything but high quality goods on such a plan? The goods must sell themselves and the prices are, and must be, the lowest.

Send the coupon and shop right at home around the evening lamp. Spear's Big Free Book shows you *everything* for the home, including a big and attractive assortment of carpets, rugs and draperies in colors, patterns and designs photographed from the original goods. It's like visiting all the huge factories where household goods are made. See the pages and pages of bargains. Notice how much you can save with Spear. Write today.

Mail the Coupon

Today Sure

Don't Delay

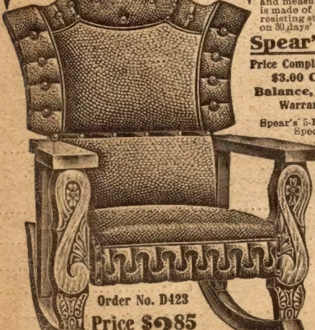
→ Spear's Bargains Save You Money ←

Spear's Big ROCKER BARGAIN

Order No. D423 Price $3.85
Only 75c Cash—Balance, 50c Monthly

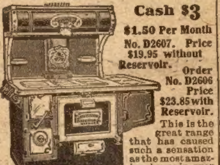
A large, roomy, comfortable, well made Rocker with wide, high back, fully tufted and buttoned. The seat is large and roomy and upholstered with high-grade black Sylvan leather over full steel springs and has beautiful ruffled edge to match back. Construction is solid hard wood throughout, high gloss, golden oak, "Kenwood" quarter-sawed finish.

30 Days' Free Trial



Order No. D423
Price $3.85

Spear's Famous New "Royal Plymouth" Range

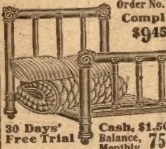


Cash $3
$1.50 Per Month

No. D2607. Price $19.95 without Reservoir. Order No. D2606 Price $23.85 with Reservoir.

This is the great range that has caused such a sensation as the most amazing bargain ever offered. Easily worth $35. Yet our price is only $23.85 (without reservoir, $19.95). Every feature is complete and perfect. Oven is of same proportions and construction features found in the very highest priced ranges and measures 18 inches square. The body is made of Spear's celebrated P.P.P. rust-resisting steel. Full nickel trimmed. Sold on 30 days' Free Kitchen Trial.

Bed, Mattress, Spring, Pillows



Order No. D312
Complete $9.45

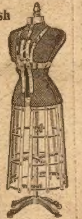
30 Days' Free Trial

Cash, $1.50
Balance, Monthly 75c

This handsome, complete Metal Bed Outfit, consisting of heavy, perfectly constructed Iron Bed, any color, 4 feet 6 inches wide; a good woven wire spring with all steel frame; 50-pound cotton top mattress; 2 feather pillows. This is one of the great bargains that has made Spear famous the world over for the most remarkable low furniture prices to be had anywhere.

Spear's Latest "Crown" Adjustable Dress Form

Price $12.45
$1.50 Cash
Balance 75c Monthly



This great new style dress form makes dressmaking easy and a pleasure. Helps you to dress in up-to-date fashion at small cost. Eliminates the discomfort of being fitted. Quickly solves every difficulty and does away with guesswork, disappointment, and saves expense and waste of valuable material.

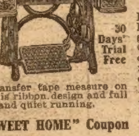
The following adjustments are possible: Bust measure, 32 to 43 in.; Neck measure, 12 to 15 in.; Waist measure, 20 to 31 in.; Hips, 35 to 49 in.; Length of back, 13 to 16 in.

Order No. D2540
30 Days' Free Trial

Spear's "Steinway" Sewing Machine

Price Complete, only $18.45
$3.00 Cash—Balance, $1.25 a Month
Warranted 10 Years

Order No. D3209



All Attachments Given FREE

30 Days' Trial Free

Spear's 5-Drawer "Steinway Special" Sewing Machine is an improved Drop Head style. No sewing machine agent could afford to sell a machine like this at such a price. Full-sized sewing head for double lock stitch. Woodwork is golden Oak, richly embossed design, high varnished finish. Four side drawers and center drawer. 18-inch transfer tape measure on front of table. The iron frame is ribbon design and full ball bearing which insures easy and quiet running.

Be Sure to Send "HOME SWEET HOME" Coupon for FREE Catalogue

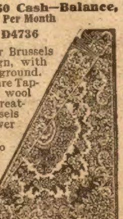
→ SPEAR & CO. ←

Dept. C, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Spear's Room-Size Brussels Rug Bargain

Only $11.95 $1.50 Cash—Balance, 75c Per Month

Order No. D4736



Beautiful, high color Brussels Rug, red rose design, with green leaves and tan ground. Guaranteed full 9-wire Tapestry Brussels with wool facing. This is the greatest genuine Brussels Rug value you ever saw.

It is perfectly safe to order direct from this advertisement, as we positively will refund your money if on receipt you are not perfectly satisfied with your bargain.

Size 9x12

Spear's "HOME SWEET HOME" Coupon

SPEAR & CO.
Dept. C, Pittsburgh, Pa.

I would like to know all about the Spear Open Account, Easy Payment Plan for home furnishing. Please send me, free, your complete Bargain Catalogue with Prices, Terms and Information, without the slightest obligation on my part.

NAME ....

STREET ....

TOWN ....

STATE ....